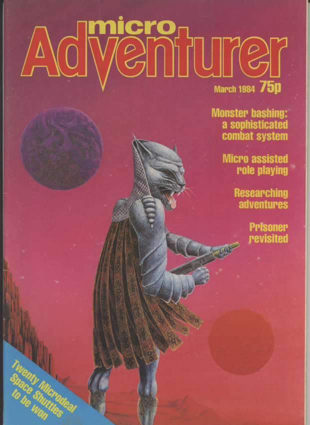

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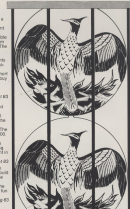
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"Adventures which have a fast response time, are spectacular in the amount of detail and number of locations, and are available to cassette owners . . I am extremely impressed . . The Level 9 Adventures are superbly designed and programmed, the contents first rate. The implementation of Colossal Cave (Adventure) is nothing short of brilliant; rush out and buy it. While you're at it, buy their others too. Simply smashing!"
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"I found Dungeon exceedingly well planned and written, with a fast response. There are well over 200 locations and the descriptions are both lengthy and interesting. The objects number about 100. It could therefore take some months to explore the whole network, giving many hours of enjoyment in the process."
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–Which Micro?, Aug 83

"My appetite has been whetted and I intend to get my own copy (of Snowball) to play."
– What Micro?, Dec 83



ADVENTURE REVIEWS

"This has to be the bargain of the year. If adventures are your game then this (Colossal Adventure) is your adventure."
– HCW, 5 Sept 83

"Colossal Adventure is simply superb. Anyone who wishes to use adventures in an educational setting really must use and see this program as it emulates Crowther and Wood's masterpiece so well. For those who wish to move onto another adventure of similar high quality, Dungeon Adventure is to be recommended. With more than 200 locations, 700 messages and 100 objects it will tease and delight!"
– Educational Computing, Nov 83

Colossal Adventure is included in Practical Computing's Top 10 games choice: "Poetic, moving and tough as hell."
– PC, Dec 83

"To sum up, Adventure Quest is a wonderful program, fast, exciting and challenging. If you like adventures then this one is for you"
– NILUG # 1.3

"Colossal Adventure . . For once here's a program that lives up to its name . . a masterful feat. Thoroughly recommended"
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"wholly admirable"
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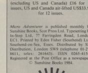
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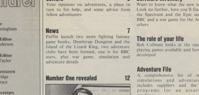


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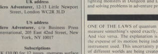
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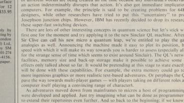
ADVENTURES ● WAR GAMES ● SIMULATIONS



EDITORIAL

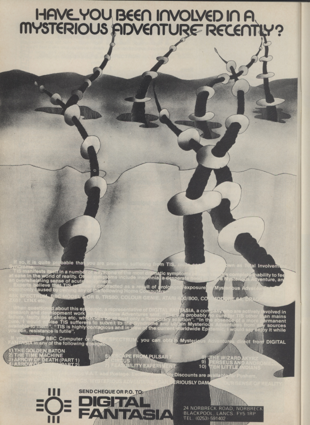


ONE OF THE LAWS of quantum science, at the subatomic level, is that if you want to measure something's speed exactly, there's no way you can do the same for its position. And vice versa. The explanation is that an electron's location can only be measured at the expense of its motion being indeterminably disrupted, for example by the measuring instrument used. This uncertainty principle raises the interesting possibility that millions of different worlds are being created all the time because any individual's observation of an action indeterminably disrupts that action. It's also got immediate implications for computers. For example, the principle is said to be creating problems for 64K chip designers, while other researchers have tried to put this "uncertainty" to profit in Josephson junction chips. However, IBM has recently decided to drop its research into these super-fast switching devices.



There are lots of other interesting concepts in quantum science but let's stick with the first one for the moment and try applying it to the new Sinclair QL machine. After all, if Sir Clive can call his new micro a quantum leap, we're entitled to play the game of analogies as well. Announcing the machine made it easy to plot its position, but the speed with which it will make its way towards you is harder to assess (especially allowing for the strange sense of time which seems to exist around Sinclair). The QL's networking facilities, memory size and back-up storage make it possible to achieve some of the effects only talked about so far. It would be pretending at this stage to state exactly what will be done with these capabilities. For example, the extra memory could go towards more ingenious graphics or more realistic text-based adventures. Or perphaps the QL will pave the way towards multi-player games — with players taking on different roles and the computer itself playing a convincing range of characters.

As adventures moved down from mainframes to micros a host of programming skills were developed and applied. Just try imagining what can be done as programmers learn to extend their repertoires even further. And so back to the beginning: if we know where we are now, we don't know how fast we are travelling. But the ride certainly promises to be exciting.


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LETTERS

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One's number is up

I WAS interested to read Mike Grace's article on *The Prisoner* in your December issue.

But I must point out that Mike Grace is under a misconception. *The Prisoner* was not conceived by Patrick McGoohan, even if he was the executive producer of the series and did direct some of the episodes.

The creator of *The Prisoner* was, in fact, my client George Markstein who, as Mike Grace will have noted from the credits, story edited the first 12 episodes as well.

The pilot script, *Arrival*, was also written by George Markstein (with David Tomblin who was the producer). And it was George Markstein who was responsible for "the concept and mood of the whole series" which, as Mike Grace correctly states, "is set in the first few minutes."

Further, the dialogue quoted in the article was written by George Markstein and, if you look closely enough, you will actually see Mr Markstein sitting behind the desk on which the prisoner's fist crashes down in every pre-title sequence. Therefore, as you will realise, George Markstein is No 1!

It might be of interest to some of your readers to learn that this agency, which has represented writers of the calibre of George Markstein for more than 10 years, is now taking on the representation of software writers too.

We would like to hear from anyone who has the kind of programming imagination and talent that created *The Prisoner*, so, if there's anybody out there who fits the bill they should contact me.

Jacqui Lyons,
Marjacq Scripts Limited,
32 Cumberland Mansions,
Nutford Place,
London.

A Quill for children

I BUY *Micro Adventurer* regularly as I believe that simulations and games have an important part to play in computer-assisted learning with children.

Could I ask through your columns if anybody has produced a simple skeleton-module adventure program that children could modify? The Quill is a little too difficult for them. The educational potential for creative English is considerable.

P D Fiddler,
Finham Junior Mixed School,
Green Lane,
Coventry.

Cryptic clues

I CAN understand the difficulty of how far to go when giving help for adventures. Giving a direct answer could spoil the pleasure in working out a particular problem. But one could go round and round making the same silly mistake when all that is needed is a nudge in a slightly different direction to solve the problem.

How about starting a column of cryptic clues supplied by readers who have solved an adventure and can help out in the two or three or more really sticky situations.

I am at present battering through Adventure Quest by Level 9 Computing (fantastic programs) and to give an example I would say 'To dispose of the Giant you must first climb a tree'.

If your readers could send in some of these clues after solving an adventure I am sure that it would give a lot of help as well as providing interesting reading.

M Maloney,
Beverley Road,
Livertowe.

WE APPRECIATE your problem. In fact some readers do write in with clues to adventures which we publish on this page (see below). If you have no luck here you could try the adventure contact section at the back of the magazine where someone might be familiar with the game you're doing.

Gollum's riddle

AM I the only person who seems to know the answer to Gollum's riddle in The Hobbit? Which animal has four feet in the morning, two at midday, and three at evening? It's obvious, man. (Baby crawling, man, old man with stick . . .)

However, telling Gollum this does not placate him and he strangles me nonetheless. It's much easier to kill the nasty little creep to begin with.

A friend of mine has discovered that you can get and carry both Elrond and Bard. Carrying Elrond with you can be quite useful as he continuously distributes free lunches. And, to be honest, carrying Bard is the only way I've found of getting him to the Lonely Mountain. There must be a better way.

Finally, I enjoyed the article on *The Prisoner*. Also, I think I've finally figured out what's going on. In the James Bond film *Thunderball* the SPECTRE organisation has both a Number One and a Number Two. Alas, they did not show No One's face, but from the voice I suspect it was either Norman Tebbit or Barbara Cartland.

Come to think of it, Patrick McGoohan is pretty much the sort of thing you'd get if you left Sean Connery in a vat of embalming fluid and hair restorer for a few months. Obviously, McGoohan will be busted out of The Village in the near future by a crack squad of Albanian acrobats disguised as Judy Garland.

Gethyn Jones,
Caernarfon,
Gwynedd.

"I wish you would tidy up after your adventure games, Sidney!"

Programmer thanked

I WAS very gratified to see a reference to Lords of Time in your January 1984 issue of *Micro Adventurer*.

But I would like to make it clear to your readers that while the design of the game was mine, most of the hard work (programming) was done by Pete Austin of Level 9 Computing.

Sue Gazzard,
Harrow,
Middx.

Nosferatu revamped

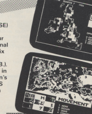
WE have noted the comments in your review of Nosferatu in the December 1983 issue of *Micro Adventurer*, page 23, and would like to advise readers that we now have the final published version of this adventure game — minus the couple of bugs you mention.

Andy Hieke,
Terminal Software,
Manchester.



"REDSHIFT HAS MADE THE WORLD OF WAR GAMES ORIENTATED COMPUTER GAMES ITS OWN" P.C.W. – 24/30 NOV 83 ISSUE

The leading game (APOCALYPSE) has four different maps, on any one of which you may fight your war (see section A.). An additional tape which contains a further six maps may also be added to expand your atlas (see section B.). Alternatively, you can be NERO in the FALL OF ROME or Napoleon's right-hand man in NAPOLEON'S CAMPAIGN in 1813 (see section C.). Can you survive the War of 1984 or could you lead your marines from island to island in the PACIFIC war? (see section D.).



A. APOCALYPSE For: Spectrum 48K & BBC Model B £9.95 inc. VAT and P&P. Available from J Menzies, Boots & Microdealer UK.	**B. Volume 1: NOVAMAPS** Six New Maps! USA, ARCTIC CIRCLE SE ASIA, STAR SYSTEMS S AFRICA, NETHER EARTH
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2 new fantasy game books from Puffin

PUFFIN will this month release two more books in their fighting fantasy adventure game series.

They are Deathtrap Dungeon and Island of the Lizard King, both written by one of the series' two authors, Ian Livingstone.

In Deathtrap Dungeon you take up "the challenge of a lifetime", issued by the baron of a distant village.

Years ago, to bring prestige to his village, the baron and his subjects built a labyrinth into a hillside. Baron Sukumvit then offered a reward of 10,000 gold pieces and the freedom of the nearby town of Chaing Mai to the first person capable of getting through the labyrinth or dungeons.

This year you decide to take on the challenge of the Trial of Champions and aim to be the first victor.

In Island of the Lizard King it is your quest to rescue some kidnap victims and to assassinate the king of the island.

You have accepted a plea of help from an old friend with whom you have recently become re-aquainted. His name is Mungo.

Mungo lives in a poor fishing village that has been raided recently by the inhabitants of Lizard Island.

These creatures have also kidnapped some young men from the town, and Mungo and his relatives are eager to rescue them.

However, you must fight a group of genetic misfits, the results of the blundered experiments of the Lizard Island king.

Other obstacles theatening your chances of survival are man-eating plants and giant beasts, victims also of the king's failed genetic experiments.

All of the books in the adventure series of seven, with the exception of Warlock of Firetop Mountain, have been designed as autonomous adventures that can be played as if on, but without needing a computer or software.

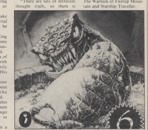
According to Clare Somerville, from Puffin, the books have evolved from role-playing and strategy games.

"There are lots of different thought trails, so there is more than one way through the book. And the mazes are randomly generated so a player can't get used to it."

Warlock of Firetop Mountain was the only book likely to be accompanied with computer software.

The fighting fantasy adventure series had been the best-selling children's paperback books that Puffin had produced, with more than 1 million copies having been sold since the first launches in September 1982, Clare said.

The other five adventures in the series, some of which were also written by Steve Jackson, are Forest of Doom, The Citadel of Chaos, City of Thieves, The Warlock of Firetop Mountain and Starship Traveller.


The monster featured in Deathtrap Dungeon

Adventure advice given to members

BRITAIN's first adventure club, which began recently, aims to take the guess work out of buying games.

Called the International Adventure club if offers a range of services for members including crib sheets for hundreds of games, regular updates and a catalogue of available and worthwhile adventures.

Being also a software company known as Adventure-Zone Software the club aims to have on stock all popular adventures.

Simon Clarke, the managing director of the club, has already received some response from players in the United States, Sweden, Norway, Israel, Hong Kong and the Falkland Islands.

Two main services the club offers are the sale of adventure games at discount prices (to members only) and an adventure help line.

At present the club has 63 adventures on hand, and as it expands both nationally and internationally, Simon plans to provide at any one time between 70 and 80 games for 101 different makes of micro computers.

The membership was expected to grow from just over 100 now to about 5,000 within the next six months, Simon said. The annual membership fee was £5.

All the profits from the sale of in-house games and commercially produced ones to non-members would be ploughed back into the club.

Among the games available from the club now are The Hobbit, the Scott Adams Mysterious Adventures 1 to 12, Artic 1 to 5 and Pimania's Groucho.

Machines catered for are the BBC A and B, ZX Spectrum, ZX81, Atari 400, 800, 600XL, Oric 1, Vic 20, Commodore 64, Dragon 32 and 64, Apple, Tandy Colour and Video Genie.

To contact the adventure help line or for further information concerning the club write to Simon Clarke, The International Adventure Club, 10 Ennis Close, Harpenden, Herts.

Valhalla converted for the CBM 64

VALHALLA for the Commodore 64 should be hitting the streets any day now, according to Legend spokesman John Peel.

The conversion of the game previously available only for the Spectrum should be completed by the beginning of this month.

John said discussions were being held with manufacturers for the conversion of Valhalla onto other machines.

Commodore users could look forward to an improved version of Valhalla compared to the Spectrum offering.

"The characters will be larger, in colour and flicker-free," John said.

Valhalla for Commodore 64 will retail for £14.95.

CCS recreates 1917 conflict

INCLUDED IN the new releases from CCS Ltd are two strategy games and a war game all for the Spectrum 48K.

Based on the First World War, Battle 1917 is a game designed for two players. It is played on a board which displays a battle map that changes with each game.

The aim of the game is to test a player's skill and tenacity while in combat as a WWI general.

Each player has 29 pieces, which include infantry, cavalry, tanks, artillery and a king.

Like Chess, the object of the game is to kill the enemy king, who is the weakest and slowest piece on the board.

The CCS strategy game, Brewery, requires the player to develop business skills.

Your task is to prepare the marketing and production plans of a brewery.

In order for you to do this the program lets you define your objective in terms of sales and capital growth. The varying market conditions will affect your business peformance and will provide many levels of difficulty.

In Stockmarket you get the chance to play the investment game using someone else's money.

In this business simulation you are given a portfolio of up to six different shares which you manage for five days.

You are given company reports, news flashes, share price reports and four graphs to assist you in making decisions.

The shares rise and fall according to current trends and randomised news flashes.





You must use your judgement to buy and sell profitably.

At the end of the week the computer analyses your tactics and gives you a rating based on the quality of the decisions you have made.

Arcade zones in on USSR

ARCADE SOFTWARE has designed a game that loads in four parts for the Spectrum 48K.

The game is known as The Zone and has been under development for several months.

Special features include full-screen, high-resolution images for most locations, a large vocabulary and a multitude of problems to work through.

One of the game's four writers, Bruce Rutherford, says that The Zone is situated somewhere deep within the USSR.

And in this forbidding territory live creatures endowed with a superior life force. Those who enter The Zone will be subjected to strange trials.

The object of the game is to discover and unravel The Zone's dark secret.

But to prevent you from doing this are a myriad of death traps that can be successfully avoided if you read and carefully follow certain sign posts.

While there are no divisions based on levels of difficulty, a player's progress depends upon how well he solves the problems presented.

The quality of your answer influences the type of problem, easier or more difficult, you next encounter. This then determines how fast you make your way through The Zone.

"The program," says Bruce, "tests your intelligence. If you can't carry out certain skills it will simplify the problems."

The amount of memory required for all the problems made the program difficult to write, Bruce said, but he expected it to be released soon.

Big Brother's trifling with the jellyoids

VISIONS Software Factory has news for George Orwell. It claims he had the date wrong when he penned his totalitarian tale. The events really occurred 10 years later.

1994 is an adventure losely based on Orwell's novel 1984. The main character in the game, Smithy, sets out to destroy the central computer, which is the bane of his life.

But before he can complete his task he must overcome such obstacles as plasma bolts, jellyoids ("no trifling matter") and a poorly lit maze of corridors.

1994, which was released earlier this year is available for the Spectrum at £6.95.

Also jumping on the Orwellian bandwagon is Incentive Software with a business simulation called 1984.

According to Incentive manager, Ian Andrew, you take on the role of a Prime Minister and run the country and its economy to the best of your ability. But when inflation, unemployment and other economic indicators get out of hand you'll be made redundant.

"At the beginning of the game and at various intervals throughout you are shown graphs on inflation, the balance of trade and exchange rates. You then go into wage negotiations with, perhaps, British Rail, make them an offer of about 9% while trying to keep inflation down," Ian said.

"The game is quite easy to play. You answer yes or no to the questions the program asks."

The simulation is available for the Spectrum at £5.50 and the BBC B at £6.50.

BBC users' club to supply programs

AN international BBC users club for adventure players has been launched in London.

For a £12 annual membership fee you will receive a monthly newsletter, a penfriend service and an adventure program written by a fellow enthusiast.

According to the club organiser, David Tarlton, members will be sent a questionnaire asking them what facilities they would like to see the club provide and which members' games are the most popular.

"If members can rate the programs we send out we will know which ones are the best," David said.

"We'll sell the most popular ones in the club, and the best ones will be sold commercially.

"After packaging and posting have been paid for the money will go to the authors of the games," he said.

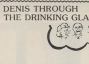
The club is a non-profit organisation.

David has placed advertisements explaining how to join the club in most of the trade publications such as *Acorn User* and *BBC Micro*.

He said that people from as far away as Singapore and Canada had expressed interest.

Anyone interested in joining the club should write to David Tarlton at 18 Whatlake House, Woodberry Down, London, N4.

DENIS THROUGH THE DRINKING GLASS



Why did Denis Thatcher visit the Pope wearing a truss and a parachute and carrying a lawn mower?
What use is the cherry blossom?
Who is that strange tramp in the woods?

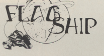
Only you can discover, but first you must deal with Ken Livingstone, Norman Tebbit and lots of other characters in this zany political adventure.

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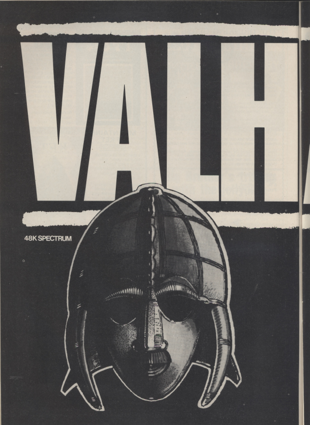
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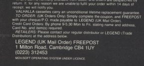
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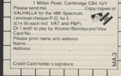


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A pennyfarthing for O

WHEN *THE PRISONER* was first shown on television back in 1968 I was one of the eager fans who followed each episode, puzzled but intrigued at the quirky storyline and the inexplicable plot that seemed to get more and more unfathomable with the passing weeks.

At last the final two episodes, *Once Upon A Time* and *Fall Out*, were to be screened. *Fall Out* was in two parts, which would, we were told by the media at the time and according to Patrick McGoohan, explain it all.

All was to become clear. At last! You could almost hear the country sigh with relief as we all thought: "Now we'll find out what it's all about," and perhaps even discover the answer to the biggest dilemma: the identity of Number One.

The butler

I sat through *Once Upon A Time* with utter fascination and complete mystification, but instead of becoming clearer the plot was thickening even more. Now, more than ever, the final episode was awaited. After all, there was so much more to be exlained.

The night came. All over the country people sat, glued to the screen, trapped by the whole affair. In the week preceding we had been going round asking, "Who is Number One?", and putting forward suggestions: the butler? The controller? The supervisor? Number Two after all? And yet, in hindsight, we had been given the answer, we just handn't been able to recognise it.

As *Fall Out* was transmitted it became obvious that the answer was to be late in coming. Further and further into the programme we went, and deeper and deeper became the symbolism — the allegory. How would they fit it into the time? Was this to be copout? Would we be treated to a series without an ending? Suddenly the Prisoner, who was escaping, had escaped. Suddenly he was in London with Number Two, the butler and youth, played by Alexis Kanner. And suddenly the whole thing was over and we were all left wondering quite what had happened and how McGoohan had got away with such an incredible fraud.

Pandemonium hit the viewers. Frustration was everywhere. People felt cheated, infuriated, exasperated, even violent. McGoohan was reported as saying that he had to go into hiding in the mountains for two weeks to avoid being lynched.

Audiences weren't use to the idea of having to think, having to work it out for themselves. In *Fall Out* we saw Number One as a figure wearing a mask, and after the mask is pulled off we see a monkey mask, and then we see Number 6 (or McGoohan) and then it's over — in a flash. So Number One is really Number 6.

Well, we were given a clue in the number on the front door of Number 6's house in London, which the camera lingers over in *Many Happy Returns*. So if you watch the series again after knowing this fact, you can find subtle hints sprinkled throughout. And yet, if the documentary shown on Channel 4 is to be believed, even McGoohan didn't know who Number One was to be.

I sat through the final episode in 1968 as bewildered as the rest. Yet, in the closing seconds of the episode I received a flash of insight that, for me anyway, tied the whole series together. I thought I knew what McGoohan had been trying to say.

Let me remind you that in *Fall Out* the Prisoner was brought into a cave (after winning a fight to the death with Number Two in *Once Upon A Time*) to find the enigmatic Number One. But before he actually met the mystery man he had to undergo an inauguration ceremony, which consisted of an audience with masked and cowled figures who behaved with idiotic simplicity. This apparently was in recognition of his right to be an individual.

When he was finally confronted with the truth — that he was Number One, the Prisoner seemed to go berserk, bringing destruction to the Village before escaping with Number Two, the butler and youth.

The four of them were next seen stepping from a van in London. Number Two headed for the Houses of Parliament (the symbol, of authority in our world). Back to his home went Number 6. As he climbed into his Lotus again, we saw the butler step up to the Prisoner's front door. As Number 6 drove off, the door swung open with the familiar hum of all doors in the Village — and it was that simple thing that made me realise what the whole thing had been about.

Shattered reports

As I see it, the intention of this scene was to demonstrate that the Village had always been life, civilisation, us, whatever, our own world is a Village. All the episodes are but symbolic episodes about life. *Free For All* was a political episode, *The General* had some pithy comments about education, *Checkmate* commented on the freedom of the individual (or perhaps the lack of it), *Schizoid Man* looked at our problems with our own identity (mental illness perhaps), and so on. And that was the key. My own realisation meant quite a lot at the time, although in hindsight, and with the screening of the long-overdue and slightly disappointing *Six Into One — The Prisoner File*, it does seem more obvious now.

Of course, *The Prisoner* can never be fully explained. It isn't meant to be. It is what you see in it — and you should be free to see as much as you like. The series has been analysed and probed as the years



Have you been going around identity of Number One? Mike

have passed with over-enthusiastic thoroughness. Some would say analysed too much and that *The Prisoner* was, after all, just a television show. But in truth *The Prisoner* was conceived to be more than just a television show — and time has proved it so.

What other series continues to amaze and delight after 15 years? What other series could you watch time and time again — without a hint of boredom? I might add that my own fascination might just be a help at this stage. Without a doubt Patrick McGoohan helped create a masterpiece, whether it was to your taste or not.

Over the years many myths and misconceptions have arisen concerning the show. Recently I read of an interview given by McGoohan on Canadian TV which shattered quite a few earlier reports. One revelation was the fact that *The Prisoner* was conceived as a seven-episode series (not 26 as I had read earlier). Sir Lew Grade had persuaded McGoohan to make it a 26-series run to help international marketing — but they could only just manage 17.

Another revelation was that Rover, (the large balloon that had trapped Villagers) came about as a last-minute inspiration after the mechanical Rover prepared for the series had broken down on the day of shooting. It was a weather balloon in the sky that gave the production manager, Bernard Williams, the idea of using large balloons.

I have already mentioned the documentary on Channel 4 but perhaps a further brief word would be applicable here. I found the attempt to mimic the style of the series slightly out of place, and definitely inferior to the original. While some of the interviews were fascinating, it was not so much what was said as what wasn't said that was interesting.

O ne's thoughts

nd in circles trying to guess the
ke Grace knows, and tells who it is

There seemed to me to be a definite feeling of antagonism between McGoohan and the other writers and directors which could be the reason for the success of the show. That McGoohan is an individual with strong feelings and a strong belief in himself came across fiercely. That Lord Grade allowed such a controversial series to be made also impressed me.

Once you realise that the whole concept is an allegory, some of the earlier conversations begin to take on a new meaning. Look afresh at this short extract from *Checkmate*.

Villager: "I'm on my side."
Number 6: "Aren't we all?"
Villager: "You must be new here. In time most of us join the enemy — against ourselves."
Number 6: "Have you?"

Here is an extract from what is, to me, one of the best and most sinister episodes, *Dance of The Dead*.

Number 6: "I have a choice?"
Number 2: "You do what you want. As long as it's what the majority want . . ."
And later in the same episode:
Number 6: "Why haven't I a costume?"
Number 2: "Perhaps because you don't exist."

So how should we view the series? I think we have to accept three levels. The first is on the surficial level of a spy thriller. Here Number 6 was a spy who had been abducted to the Village, a place where spies were kept and interrogated for sinister and unexplained purposes. This level sold the series, added to the excitement, and enhanced the mystery (especially on first viewing).

Also (and this was one of the revelations of the *Prisoner File* documentary) there now seems no doubt that the series was intended as a follow-up to *Danger Man* where the prisoner was indeed John Drake. Thus, in the eyes of some of the writers it would seem that the surficial level was to be as far as the series would go (and it was only the intervention of McGoohan that drove us later onto a deeper level). I found the fact that the series was made up of several interpretations by the makers of the show a good explanation of the multiplicity of levels.

The second level I have already mentioned — that of the Village as the world, Number 2 as authority and the spy story as an allegory that represents the many facets of our totalitarian society including our view of numbers and our loss of individualism in order to fit into society. This is an obvious level on second viewing, and is not too unusual.

On the third level, which is virtually impossible to fully analyse as each of us would react differently, the Village can be viewed as a person. Are we trying to escape from ourselves? We all do — at times.

Now the sky becomes the limit in explanation. Why are the long corridors in the hospital filled with prone figures apparently being brainwashed? What is the relevance of the repeated motif that Number 6 must always return to the Villages — even drawn back as in *Many Happy Returns*? When Number 6 finally gets to be Number 2 in *Free For All* he just plays with his power — wastes it. And the ultimate — if we are Number One then why is Number One depicted as an evil force ruling over everything? Are we all governed by our evil side?

The plots intertwine, making it impossible to watch an episode on just one level. For example you could watch *Dance of The Dead* as a spy story: his attempts at escape, his attempt to leave a message in the wallet of the dead body; or as a comment on society: the travesty of justice in his trial, the conversation on freedom in a democracy; and on the deeper level of self-realisation: the attack of the Village that contains a nightmare flavour I still find disturbing to watch and the Prisoner's lack of costume because he doesn't exist.

Open umbrella

In *Checkmate* we still have the spy theme with the escape onto the boat, mingled with the deeper personal level linking life to a chess game and loss of freedom: "We're all pawns, m'dear". The point that Number 6 is trapped by his own assertiveness and fails to achieve what he most desires is subtlely made.

I could continue with example after example of how I see the series — but that might spoil it for you. Instead I'll confine myself to a few more interesting aspects. One that seems to cause a lot of excitement is the fact that Channel 4 have shown the episodes in a different order from the previous screenings. However, some people claim that the series has never been shown in the right order. I have heard a rumour that *Free For All* was intended to be the second episode in the series. And it would seem that *Dance of The Dead* should also run early in the series judging by some of the lines. Yet this time *Many Happy Returns* was shown second, and previously *The Chimes of Big Ben* came second.

Another feature which lacks a clear explanation is the predominance of circles in the Village. The umbrella held open often forms a circle, the light over Number 6's bed is another, Rover is an obvious circle. The ending of *Fall Out* was the same as the beginning of every episode — another circle. Then we have the pennyfarthing, the symbol of the Village. On the badges, in the credits, in Number Two's room inside the Green Dome (another circle), in odd shots, the pennyfarthing crops up all over the place.

Be seeing you

Does it have a special meaning? Some have suggested it forms the ultimate in unreality (whatever that means). To others the wheels exist as a large circle beside a small one, as in history (and I don't really understand that one either). I suspect it was just a handy symbol which fitted the concept of the show as McGoohan saw it and nothing more. After all, there is a danger of analysing too deeply.

What is certain is that the Prisoner cannot escape, as highlighted in that superb final shot of his face zooming up to the camera as the bars clang in front of him. It is also shown that the harder the Prisoner tries the harder it is to escape.

Again I have heard it reported that McGoohan intended for this to be the main theme — that to be an individual in society and to be free in yourself you must conform. The harder you fight — the less freedom you acquire.

Another article states that McGoohan intended the door opening in his home at the very end of the series to represent the fact that the individual can never attain freedom — that when the door opens on its own we know there is someone inside waiting to start the whole thing all over again. There is no escape. And that is where I first came in. I have enjoyed the series immensely. I think the whole concept ripe for adventure — and I hope someone acquires the rights.

To think that it all began as McGoohan was filming an episode of *Danger Man* in Portmeiron and has grown into a cult show that fascinates the world over is quite staggering. As an expression of his own philosophy it must delight Number 6 that his ideas and determination still strike a chord in so many.

One final point: when asked which phrase he would like the series to be remembered by, Patrick McGoohan said he hoped it would be the greeting, "Be seeing you." The meaning of this is, like everything else in the series, up to the individual to interpret . . . or is it? □

A beginner's guide to games writing

Andy Mitchell reveals the secret of successful adventure programming

TIRED OF zapping nasties or writing arcade games in Basic? Baffled by machine code? Then writing adventure games is just what you need.

Writing adventure games is one of the easiest of the popular games for home computer authors to succeed at — and some think the best fun. The games can be set anywhere in time and space from the mists of pre-Christian magic and sorcery to the far reaches of space beneath alien suns — and in your world anything goes.

Most early adventures were written on large mainframe computers by bored programmers when the boss wasn't looking. And they lacked the benefit of sound or graphics. On the BBC micro, games can be given the added spark of life with the use of the powerful sound generator and the colour of Teletext graphics.

Exciting task

Most newcomers to programming can easily write a 10 line program but when they attempt an adventure game, its sheer size causes untold problems. This is like a handy man building a wall five bricks high then trying to use the same techniques to build a skyscraper. The key to success is structured programming. Before you groan and turn the page fear not, BBC Basic is here to solve this problem.

Newcomers' early programs, which are unstructured and sprinkled with GOTOs, turn into a nightmare when the program size exceeds one sheet of listing paper. BBC Basic, with its use of procedures, enables the novice to build large adventures as simply as turning a small Lego model into a skyscraper.

Convinced? I hope so, for you will find that writing this style of game is more exciting than playing most others — and it's easier. What's more once you have the basic building blocks of your first game you will be able to use them again and again to create endless adventures to amuse and baffle your friends.

The first task of the game writer is to decide where and when he wants his adventure to take place. The most popular locations are associated with sword and sorcery, such as Castle of Riddles by Acornsoft. This is because we can do anything we like with the element of magic in the game.

If we find a need to do something which would be illogical in the real world, for example crossing a wide crevasse, we can simply wave our magic wand and presto we've created a bridge.

In space scenarios we could use a matter transmitter or an anti-gravity power pack. The location chosen is usually a closed-off area to restrict the player to certain rooms. Such places are caves, ruined temples, castle dungeons or abandoned space stations.

Having decided on our location we must now decide on the purpose of the game. Two types of purpose are most common. the first is simply to fully explore the location and overcome all the obstacles within it, and thus eventually finding the hidden treasures (Sphynx Adventure).

The second type is where there is a single object of purpose to the game and the other articles hidden within the location are simply to be found and used to find the solution or treasure. Having decided on the location of the game and its purpose we should draw a map of our adventure land.

To illustrate the building of an adventure from the beginning to end I have chosen a traditional location of a castle filled with magic and treasure.

The map of the adventure is drawn as shown in Figure 1 where each square is a room or location. Thanks to the beauty of BBC Basic we will be able to build our game out of individual bricks which we can easily use to create a game as large as we like. These procedures could also be used in future games. So sharpen your sword, polish your shield and boldly step forward into the dark . . .

Magic word

The object of our game is for the player to find all the treasures hidden in the castle and then escape through the southern gate. The main program is that this gate is locked. To ensure that the player gets past all the obstacles before he completes the game we should design the problems so that the answer to the last one cannot be solved without the answers to the preceeding problems. Therefore we must decide on the solution to the final problemm (ie getting out of the southern gate) and block this by a series of other puzzles.

In our game the gate in room one cannot be opened unless we give the magic word shazam, which is written on the wall in room 13. But we cannot get in to room 13 until we kill the dragon in room 12. We cannot kill the dragon without the sword from room five. We cannot enter room five until we pierce the gold curtain in room four. We cannot pierce the curtain without waving the rod. We cannot get a rod until ▷

```
10 MODE 7
20 CURRENT$=STRING$(255," "):DIM CON$(15),M$(6),LOC(7),S$(9),L$(7),VERB$(4),S
NG$(3):A%=0
30 NOUNS=9:VERBS=4:OBJECTS=7:SNGLE=3
40 R%=1:FINISH=0:DOOR=0:WELL=0:CURTAIN=0:DRAGON=0
50 ROOMS=14
60 PROCINIT
70 PROCDISPLAY
80 REPEAT
90   C1$="":C2$=""
100   INPUT IN$:LP=0
110   PROCDECODE:C1$=F$:PROCDECODE: IF F$<>"" THEN C2$=F$:IF C1$=F$ GOTO 80
120   SEARCH=0
130   PROCMOVE
140   IF SEARCH=0 PROCVERB
150   IF SEARCH=0 PROCONE
160    IF SEARCH=0 PRINT"I DONT UNDERSTAND"
170   IF R%=14 FINISH=1
180   UNTIL FINISH =1
190  PROCFINAL:END
200 REM***********************
210 DEFPROCINIT
220 PROCSETROOM
230 REM  READ IN ROOM CONNECTIONS
240 RESTORE 1570:FOR A=1TO ROOMS: FOR B=1 TO 6:READ C%:CON$(A)=CON$(A)+CHR$(C%
):NEXT:NEXT
250 REM READ IN DIRECTIONS
260 RESTORE 1710:FOR A=1 TO 6: READ C%: M$(A)="": M$(A)=CHR$(C%): READ A$: M$(
A)=M$(A)+A$:NEXT
270 REM READ IN OBJECT NAMES AND LOCATIONS
280 RESTORE 1720: FOR A=1 TO 7: READ S$(A): READ LOC(A): READ L$(A): NEXT
290 REM READ IN NOUNS
300 RESTORE 1730:FOR A=A TO NOUNS:READ S$(A):NEXT
310 NEM READ IN VERBS
320 RESTORE 1740:FOR A=1 TO VERBS:READ VERB$(A):NEXT
330 REM READ IN SINGLE WORDS
340 RESTORE 1750:FOR A=1 TO SNGLE:READSNG$(A):NEXT
350 ENDPROC
360 REM*******************
370 DEFPROCGETROOM
380 CURRENT$=""
390 RESTORE 1430: FOR A%=1 TO R%: READ CURRENT$:NEXT
400 ENDPROC
```


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◁ we enter room eight. We cannot enter room eight until we drop a coin in the well.

In this way we can confuse the player by ensuring that the objects he or she requires are scattered throughout the castle in a pattern that forces someone to visit all parts before the final problem can be solved.

Our next task is to draw up a map of the adventure locations and allocate each a room number noting where each object or treasure is to be initially located.

As can be seen from the map there are 14 different rooms. At the beginning of the same R% will be made equal to the room number at which we want the player to start (line 40). In our case this will be number one, (courtyard). Having drawn our map we can now write a list of room descriptions in room number order. Each description must describe the permanent features of the room, its entrances and exits, for example a large green-coloured room with exits to the south and north.

Killing a dragon

Those parts of the room which may change (THE DOOR SOUTH IS LOCKED) are omitted from the description at this point. Having written our descriptions (lines 1420-1560) we must now draw up a table of room connections. This will be used to show what room we will arrive in depending on which direction we leave the previous room. There are six numbers required for each room that correspond to the room arrived at should we travel: NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, WEST, UP, DOWN. For example room connections for room 10 — DATA 12, 9, 0, 11, 11, 0. Note: if we cannot travel in a particular direction we allocate the number 0.

As you can see for room 10 a move north would take us to room 12 and a move west or up would put us upstairs in the tower. The room connection date can be of three types: zero indicates no path; 1-59 indicates a normal room number; » 60 a number greater than 60 means that there is a path in that direction but it is blocked at this time (for example a dragon bars the way).

All this connection data is entered as DATA statements in room number order (lines 1570-1700) and the program will read this into a string DIM CON$ (line 240) where CON$(1) would contain room one numbers 9, 74, 6, 2, 0, 0 and CON$(2) contains room two numbers.

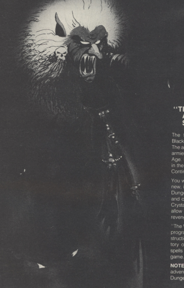
When we overcome an obstacle that blocks the path, such as killing the dragon, we use the procedure PROCCHANGE (line 980) to subtract 60 from the connection number in CON$, leaving us with a number between one and 59, thus giving us access to the next room.

As can be seen from the logic diagram (Figure 2) the main activity of the program is to compare the players commands with a list of known words and if it recognises them to call the appropriate procedure. (For example DROP COIN — calls PROCDROP and GET RUBY — calls PROCGET).

The player may give one or two word ▷

```
410 REM*********************
420 DEFPROCDISPLAY
430 PROCGETROOM:PRINT" YOU ARE ":CURRENT$
440 IF R%=7 AND WELL=1 PROCM(3)
450 IF R%=4 AND CURTAIN=1 PROCM(4)
460 IF R%=12 AND DRAGON=0 PROCM(8)
470 REM CHECK FOR OBJECT IN ROOM
480 FOR A%=1 TO OBJECTS: IF LOC(A%)=R% THEN PRINT"HERE THERE IS A ": L$(A%)
490   NEXT
500 ENDPROC
510 REM**********************
520 DEFPROCM(X%)
530 RESTORE 1770:FOR A%=1 TO X%: READ A$:NEXT
540 PRINT A$
550 ENDPROC
560 REM*******************
570 DEFPROCDECODE
580 F$="":LP=LP+1:IF MID$(IN$,LP,1)=" " THEN 580
590 F$=F$+MID$(IN$,LP,1):LP=LP+1:IF (MID$(IN$,LP,1)<>" ") AND (MID$(IN$,LP,1)<>"") THEN 590
600 ENDPROC
610 REM**********************
620 DEFPROCGET
630 SEARCH=1
640 B%=0:FOR A%=1TO OBJECTS:IF S$(A%)=C2$ THEN C%=A%:B%=1:A%=OBJECTS:IF LOC(C%)=R% THEN B%=2:LOC(C%)=0:PRINT"OK"
650   SEARCH=1
660   NEXT
670 IF B%=0 THEN PRINT"You cant"
680 ENDPROC
690 REM******************
700 DEFPROCONE
710 B%=0:FOR A%=1TO SNGLE:IF SNG$(A%)=C1$ THEN C%=A%:B%=1:A%=SNGLE
720   NEXT:IF B%=0 ENDPROC
730 SEARCH=1
740 ON C% GOTO 750,760,770
750  PROCINVENT:ENDPROC
760  PROCMAGIC:ENDPROC
770 PROCDISPLAY:ENDPROC
780 ENDPROC
790 REM********************
800 DEFPROCVERB
810 B%=0:FOR A%=1TO VERBS:IF VERB$(A%)=C1$ THEN C%=A%:B%=1:A%=VERBS
820   NEXT:IF B%=0 ENDPROC
830 SEARCH=1
840 FOR A%=1TO NOUNS:IF S$(A%)=C2$ THEN A=A%:B%=2:A%=NOUNS
850   NEXT:IF B%=1 THEN PRINT"I dont understand":ENDPROC
860  ON C% GOTO 870,880,890,900
870 PROCGET:ENDPROC
880  PROCDROP:ENDPROC
890 PROCKILL:ENDPROC
900 PROCWAVE:ENDPROC
910  ENDPROC
920 REM*****************
930 DEFPROCKILL
940 IF C2$<>"DRAGON" OR DRAGON=1 OR LOC(1)<>0 OR R%<>12 PRINT"YOU CANT":ENDPROC
950 PROCM(5):DRAGON=1:PROCCHANGE
960 ENDPROC
970 REM**********************
980 DEFPROCCHANGE
990 FOR A%=1TO6:A$=MID$(CON$(R%),A%,1):B%=ASC(A$):IF B%>60THEN B%=B%-60:B$=CHR$(B%):A$=MID$(CON$(R%),1,A%-1):A$=A$+B$:CON$(R%)=A$+MID$(CON$(R%),A%+1,6)
1000   NEXT:B%=2:ENDPROC
1010 REM*******************
1020 DEFPROCINVENT
1030 IF C1$<>"INVENT"THEN ENDPROC ELSE SEARCH=1:C%=1:FOR A%=1 TO OBJECTS:IF LOC(A%)=0:PRINTL$(A%)
1040   NEXT:ENDPROC
1090 REM******************
1100 DEFPROCWELL
1110 IF R%=7 AND WELL=0 THEN PROCM(2):WELL=1:PROCCHANGE :LOC(3)=8
1120 ENDPROC
1130 REM ******************
1140 DEFPROCDROP
1150 SEARCH=1:B%=0:FOR A%=1TO OBJECTS:IF S$(A%)=C2$ THEN C%=A%:B%=1:A%=OBJECTS:IF LOC(C%)=0 THEN B%=2:LOC(C%)=R%:PRINT"OK"
1160   NEXT
1170 IF B%<2 THEN PRINT"You have'nt got one":ENDPROC
1180 IF C2$="COIN" PROCWELL
1190 ENDPROC
1200 REM*******************
1210 DEFPROCWAVE
1220 IF C2$<>"ROD" OR R%<>4 THEN PROCM(6):ENDPROC
1230 IF LOC(2)<>0 THEN PRINT"You have none": ENDPROC ELSE PROCM(7):CURTAIN=1:PROCCHANGE
1240 ENDPROC
1250 REM********************
1260 DEFPROCFINAL
1270 PRINT"CONGRATULATIONS YOU HAVE ESCAPED"
1280 ENDPROC
1290 REM******************
1300 DEFPROCMOVE
1310 A%=0:FOR A=1TO 6:B$=MID$(M$(A),2):IF C1$=B$ SEARCH=1:B$="":B$=MID$(M$(A),1,1):A%=ASC(B$):A=6
1320   NEXT
1330 IF SEARCH=0ENDPROC
1340 B$=MID$(CON$(R%),A%,1):A%=ASC(B$)
1350 IF A%=0 OR A%>59 THEN PRINT "YOU CANT GO THAT WAY" ELSE R%=A%:PROCDISPLAY
1360 ENDPROC
1370 REM*****************
1380 DEFPROCMAGIC
1390 IF R%<>1 OR DOOR=1 PROCM(6):ENDPROC
```

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commands and the program holds these in strings C1$ and C2$ respectively. The known words are easily split into four groups: directions; nouns; verbs; single word commands.

A list of each type is made up as four separate DATA statements. The verbs are held in VERB$ (line 1740), the single words are held in SNG$ (line 1750). The NOUNS are held in the game DIM as the names of the treasures and objects S$ (line 1720-1730). The direction words are held in the move dimension M$ (line 1710). The variables VERBS, NOUNS, OBJECTS and SNGLE are used to hold the maximum number of words in each list.

The comparison between the players commands and the known lists is carried out by three procedures: PROCMOVE (1300-1360); PROCVERB (800-910); PROCONE (700-780).

PROCMOVE compares single word commands against the Direction commands held in M$ (for example NORTH, SOUTH). PROCVERB compares the first word against the objects and nouns in S$. PROCONE is used to compare against single word commands in list SNG$.

In each case if a successful comparison is made the variable SEARCH is set to 1 to stop further searching for the comparison. If after all words have been compared and SEARCH still equals 0 the message I DONT UNDERSTAND will be given (line 160) and the process returns to await further commands from the player.

Movement around the map is achieved using the four items: List of room descriptions; list of room connections; the variable R% which is set equal to the current room; dimension M$.

Figure 1: a map of the castle showing how the rooms are positioned

Figure 2: the logic diagram

The dimension M$ holds the direction commands plus a number allocated to that direction — NORTH=1 SOUTH=2 EAST=3 WEST=4 UP=5 DOWN=6.

This data is entered as DATA 1,NORTH,2,SOUTH,3,EAST,4,WEST,5, UP,6,DOWN. The setting up of M$ is carried out in PROCINIT (lines 210-350). When the player gives the command NORTH it is read in and stored in F$ by PROCDECODE then transferred to C1$.

Golden sword

PROCMOVE is used to compare this against the commands in M$. If a match is found we then find from the room connection data in CON$ whether the requested direction is permitted (line 1350) and if so, move the player to the new room by setting R% to the new room value. The move is completed by using PROCDISPLAY to print the room description for the new R%.

Scattered around our adventure we will have treasures and magical items. To build these into our game we first draw up a table of items allocating each two descriptions. For example a long black rod, ROD, a gold sword, SWORD.

The purpose of the one-word description is to be used during commands such as GET SWORD. The longer description is used when describing the object: HERE IS A GOLDEN SWORD.

We must decide where, on our map, we wish the objects to be initially located. These locations will be the room numbers in which the object is to be found so the gold sword is placed in room five. To indicate an object held by the player we will allocate location 0. The table of names and locations can now be entered as a DATA statement as shown in the program listing (line 1720). This data is read in by PROCINIT and stored in dimensions: LOC holds location numbers of each object; S$ holds short object description. L$ holds long object description.

PROCDISPLAY can now be used to print the current room description and step through dimension LOC to find any location that matches the current room and print out the long object description held L$ for the particular object (line 480). Similarly PROCINVENT (line 1020-1040) is used to give an inventory of the objects held by the player by simply searching LOC for any locations which are zero.

On receipt of a GET command the procedure PROCGET (620-680) is used to first ensure it recognises the object name being requested. If recognised the location of the object is checked to ensure it matches the current room. If all is correct the location of the object in LOC (object number) is set to zero to indicate the player is now holding it.

The reverse procedure PROCDROP (line 1140-1190) is used to leave objects in a room. It is at this time we may wish to check for special events such as DROP COIN in the wishing well room and call some other procedure (line 1180).

The task of printing replies to the player is carried out by PROCM (line 520-550). This procedure simply carries out a number of READ commands of the message data list depending on the value of the calling parameter. This is useful for giving identical replies from different procedures. These messages are also used for those parts of a room description which can change — A DRAGON BARS THE PATH

As can be seen in PROCDISPLAY (line 460) a check is made on the value of R% to see if we are in the dragon's lair (R%=12) and if the dragon is still alive (DRAGON=0) then PROCM(8) is called to add to the room description.

As an example of the addition of new commands to this basic game I will now list the changes necessary to add the single command 'HELP'.

- Add the word HELP to the list of single command words 1750 DATAINVENT, SHAZAM, LOOK, HELP
- Increase the value of SNGLE in line 30 to SNGLE=4
- Increase size of single word dimension SNG$ in line 20
- Add procedure jump in PROCONE 740 ON C% GOTO 750,760,770,775
- Add procedure call 775 PROCHELP: ENDPROC

•Insert new procedure:

```
150 REM*******
1060 DEFPROCHELP
1070 PRINT 'SORRY THE MAGICIAN
     HAS FORBIDDEN ME TO HELP'
1080 ENDPROC
```

The standard procedures and variables which are used as the basis of all future expansions are: PROCDECODE (decodes input command line into C1$ and C2$) PROCGETROOM (loads current description in CURRENT$) PROCDISPLAY (prints room description) PROCMOVE (handles move commands) PROCGET (used for picking up) PROCDROP (used to drop objects) PROCLOOK (displays current location) PROCGETROOM (loads current room description in CURRENT$) PROCINIT (loads room connection data, object names, object locations and known words) PROCVERB (executes 'Two Word' commands) PROCONE (executes 'One Word' commands) PROCCHANGE (changes room connection data) PROCM (message printing procedure) R% (current room number) CURRENT$ (holds current room description) LOC (location numbers for objects) S$ (short object names and Nouns) L$ (long object names) VERB$ (holds known verbs) SNG$ (holds known single words) SEARCH (command comparison flag) FINISH (game end flag) CON$ (holds room connection data) M$ (holds direction words) VERBS (max verbs) NOUNS (max nouns) OBJECTS (number of objects) ROOMS (number of rooms).□

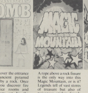
```
1400  PROCM(1):DOOR=1:PROCCHANGE
1410 ENDPROC
1420 REM*****ROOM DESCRIPTIONS****
1430 DATAIN THE COURTYARD OF THE CASTLE. EXITS ARE TO THE NORTH WEST EAST. THE
 MAIN ENTRANCE IS SOUTH
1440  DATAIN THE WEST HALL. THERE IS AN  EXIT EAST AND STEPS DOWN WEST
1450 DATAON A FLIGHT OF STEPS
1460 DATAIN A DUNGEON. THERE ARE STEPS  UP EAST AND AN EXIT SOUTH WHICH IS
COVERED IN A GOLD LIGHT
1470 DATA INSIDE A TREASURE VAULT. THE   EXIT IS NORTH
1480 DATA IN THE EAST HALL. THE EXITS ARE WEST AND EAST
1490 DATA IN A SMALL ROOM. A WISHING WELL STANDS HERE. THE EXIT IS WEST
1500 DATAIN A SECRET ROOM BEHIND THE    WISHING WELL. THE EXIT IS WEST
1510 DATAIN THE NORTH HALL. EXITS ARE   NORTH AND SOUTH
1520 DATA IN A LONG CORRIDOR LEADING     NORTH SOUTH. THERE ARE STEPS UP TO THE
 WEST
1530 DATAIN A TOWER ROOM. THE EXIT      STAIRS ARE EAST
1540 DATA IN A DRAGONS LAIR. THERE ARE   EXITS NORTH AND SOUTH
1550  DATAIN A MAGIANS ROOM. WRITTEN ON  THE WALL IS THE WORD SHAZAM
1560 DATAOUTSIDE THE CASTLE THE ROAD    LEADS TO FREEDOM
1570 DATA9,74,6,2,0,0
1580 DATA0,0,1,3,0,0
1590 DATA0,0,2,4,2,4
1600 DATA0,65,3,0,3,0
1610 DATA4,0,0,0,0,0
1620 DATA0,0,7,1,0,0
1630 DATA0,0,68,6,0,0
1640 DATA0,0,0,7,0,0
1650 DATA10,1,0,0,0,0
1660 DATA12,9,0,11,11,0
1670 DATA0,0,10,0,0,10
1680 DATA73,10,0,0,0,0
1690 DATA0,12,0,0,0,0
1700 DATA0,0,0,0,0,0
1710 DATA1,NORTH,2,SOUTH,3,EAST,4,WEST,5,UP,6,DOWN
1720 DATASWORD,5,GOLD SWORD,ROD,8,BLACK ROD,COIN,3,GOLDEN COIN,SILVER,9,BAR OF
SILVER,EMERALD,11,LARGE GREEN EMERALD,PEARL,13,LARGE PINK PEARL,RUBY,8,HUGE RED
RUBY
1730 DATADOOR,DRAGON
1740 DATAGET,DROP,KILL,WAVE
1750 DATAINVENT,SHAZAM,LOOK
1760 REM***** MESSAGES ******
1770 DATATHERE IS A FLASH OF LIGHT AND THE  MAIN GATE OPENS
1780 DATACHING! THE COIN DISAPPEARS DOWN THE WELL WHICH MAKES A SECRET DOOR TO
THE EAST  OPEN
1790 DATAA SECRET DOOR TO THE EAST IS OPEN
1800 DATATHERE IS A HOLE IN THE GOLD CURTAIN
1810  DATATHE SWORD FLASHES - AND THE DRAGON      SCREAMS AND DISAPPEARS
1820 DATANOTHING HAPPENS
1830 DATAA FLASH FLIES FROM THE ROD AND PIERCES  THE CURTAIN
1840 DATAA DRAGON BARS THE WAY NORTH
```


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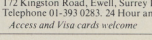
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A call to arms for monster fighters

Lyman Alpha compares the brain-teasing problems of an adventure game with the sophisticated combat style of Dungeons and Dragons

TO FIGHT or not to fight, that is the question. In most adventure games, if one encounters a monster, one does not really fight to get rid of it. In Crowther's original Colossal Cave Adventure, a player can drive away a fierce green snake by releasing a little bird that attacks the snake. You can even kill a dragon with your bare hands, but you can hardly call that fighting.

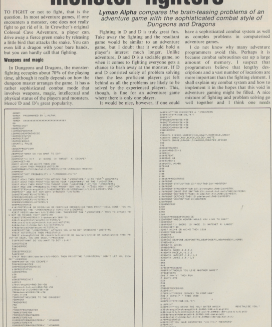
Weapons and magic

In Dungeons and Dragons, the monster-fighting occupies about 70% of the playing time, although it really depends on how the dungeon master arranges the game. It has a rather sophisticated combat mode that involves weapons, magic, intellectual and physical status of the players and monsters. Hence D and D's great popularity.

Fighting in D and D is truly great fun. Take away the fighting and the resultant game would be similar to an adventure game, but I doubt that it would hold a player's interest much longer. Unlike adventure, D and D is a sociable game, so when it comes to fighting everyone gets a chance to bash away at the monster. If D and D consisted solely of problem solving then the less proficient players get left behind as all the problems are likely to be solved by the experienced players. This, though, is fine for an adventure game where there is only one player.

It would be nice, however, if one could have a sophisticated combat system as well as complex problems in computerised adventure games.

I do not know why many adventure programmers avoid this. Perhaps it is because combat subroutines eat up a large amount of memory. I suspect that programmers believe that lengthy descriptions and a vast number of locations are more important than the fighting element. I shall explain my combat system and how to implement it in the hopes that this void in adventure gaming might be filled. A nice mixture of fighting and problem solving go well together and I think one needs





something to relieve the frustration during an adventure game.

My system is similar to that of D and D. You have four indicators that reveal your state of health and fighting ability. Strength: indicates one's strength and the maximum force you can generate. Constitution: encompasses one's stamina and general health. Dexterity: indicates one's agility and hand-to-eye co-ordination. This factor determines whether you hit or miss. Defence: your resistance to brute force.

Hit probability

The player can use various weapons which affect different results. For instance, if a mace is used to hit a monster the desired result is achieved, but it is no good for defence and when you are hit your points are reduced. Verbs such as hit, swing and thrust also affect the performance of the weapon. In my system I have included three verbs to attack. One must use the right words to gain the best effect.

There are five types of monsters and descriptions. I use two sets of five adjectives. Their status is set randomly above 50.

When one attacks a monster, the program first works out the hit probability which depends on the player's dexterity, the monsters' dexterity and how you are using your weapon.

The percentage is displayed and a result is then notified, together with the hit strength.

The hit strength depends on the player's strength, the weapon, the verb, and the monster's defence.

The resultant monster-strength is calculated as follows: strength = strength — hit strength /2. Constitution = constitution — hit strength. Defence = defence — strength /4. Dexterity = dexterity — hit strength /3.

You can play the program as it is but it is primarily designed to be incorporated in an adventure game. It can be compacted in 1K byte using shorter variable names and multi-statement lines. □

```
WELCOME TO THE DUNGEON

**********************************
YOU ENCOUNTER A GIANT GOLDEN SNAKE
**********************************

WHICH WEAPON WOULD YOU LIKE TO USE?

1) SWORD  2) MACE  3) HATCHET 4) LANCE

STATUS        EXCULIBER   MONSTER

STRENGTH      98          95
CONSTITUTION  77          88
DEXTERITY     65          81
DEFENCE       81          51
WEAPON        SWORD

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

1) HIT   2) SWING  3) THRUST  4) ESCAPE

HIT PROBABILITY = 27%

YOU SWING YOUR SWORD AT THE GIANT GOLDEN SNAKE BUT YOU'VE  MISSED HIM!

THE GIANT GOLDEN SNAKE TRYS TO ATTACK YOU BUT HE MISSES YOU!

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

1) HIT   2) SWING  3) THRUST  4) ESCAPE

HIT PROBABILITY = 34%

YOU ATTACK THE GIANT GOLDEN SNAKE WITH YOUR SWORD BUT YOU'VE  MISSED HIM!

THE GIANT GOLDEN SNAKE ATTACKS YOU WITH HIT STRENGTH 3

STATUS        EXCULIBER   MONSTER

STRENGTH      96          95
CONSTITUTION  74          88
DEXTERITY     64          81
```

```
DEFENCE       88          51
WEAPON        SWORD

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO? (1-4)

HIT PROBABILITY = 33%

YOU ATTACK THE GIANT GOLDEN SNAKE WITH YOUR SWORD AND HIT HIM WITH STRENGTH 51

STATUS        EXCULIBER   MONSTER

STRENGTH      96          69
CONSTITUTION  74          37
DEXTERITY     64          64
DEFENCE       88          38
WEAPON        SWORD

THE GIANT GOLDEN SNAKE ATTACKS YOU WITH HIT STRENGTH 2

STATUS        EXCULIBER   MONSTER

STRENGTH      95          69
CONSTITUTION  72          37
DEXTERITY     63          64
DEFENCE       79          38
WEAPON        SWORD

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO? (1-4)

HIT PROBABILITY = 32%

YOU SWING YOUR SWORD AT THE GIANT GOLDEN SNAKE AND HIT HIM WITH STRENGTH 45

STATUS        EXCULIBER   MONSTER

STRENGTH      95          46
CONSTITUTION  72          -8
DEXTERITY     63          49
DEFENCE       79          26
WEAPON        SWORD

WELL DONE! YOU HAVE DESTROYED THE GIANT GOLDEN SNAKE

PRESS (SPACE) TO CONTINUE
```

Graphic Aztec puzzle

Adventure *Aztec Tomb* **Micro** *Commodore 64* **Price** *£7.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Alligata Software, Superior Systems Ltd, 178 West St, Sheffield.*

GRAPHICS combined with text seems to be the in-thing for adventures at the moment, and Aztec Tomb follows this trend.

The quest starts in an ordinary house — well, maybe not so ordinary. Its interior is rather small to say the least, but with skill or luck you should soon find yourself in the Amazonian rain forests, trying to discover an Aztec tomb.

A split-screen technique is used. The graphics occupy the top two-thirds of the screen (with space at the right-hand edge for describing visible objects); descriptions, responses and input are confined to the lower portion.

The background is black against which the text colouring leaves a little to be desired in the way of clarity.

Each location is presented as a simple, yet colourful picture of the scene. For example a bedroom is represented by three walls, a bed and bedside cabinet.

Naturally, you'll want to open the cabinet drawer (spelt draw in the program). If you do, the picture is replaced with one where the drawer is pulled out.

The graphics are attractive and, best of all, drawn instantly — there is no waiting while chunks of the picture are filled in with colour.

Objects lying around for you to examine or pick up are not shown, but are merely described in the text.

There is no facility for switching to a text-only mode — some adventurers prefer to leave the pictures to their imagination.

The vocabulary seemed small but adequate. Apart from the usual N,S,E,W abbreviations to four letters are accepted.

Having got stuck quite early on, I decided to call for help. This cry from the heart was always met, not unfairly, with the response "Examine the think". Good advice — I decided it was time I examined the listing.

It turned out to be easy to break into the program, a fair part of which was written in Basic.

The listing is semi-protected (it overwrites itself on the screen) but to a determined adventurer not much of an obstacle when desperate for a clue and further progress.

Examining listings could be called cheating, and, in the main, I would agree. Publishers should break-proof Basic adventures to protect unscrupulous and unpersistent adventurers (who,me?) from themselves.

The adventure seemed interesting enough from the progress I made, although one or two of the puzzles seemed a little illogical or unreal in their solution. I found one bug — a jar was described as full when it was empty. With its simple stylised graphics, the adventure is probably more suitable for the younger player (the inlay recommends it for 11 year olds and over), although some of the problems are a bit sticky. Worth a play. **BC**

SOFTWARE INVENTORY

What's on the way in the adventure world — if you have a new adventure, war game or real-life simulation which you are about to release send a copy and accompanying details to Software Inventory, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

Blackbeard is out to get you

Adventure *Pirate* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price £9.25** **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Chalksoft Ltd, 37 Willowslea Rd, Worcester.*

PIRATE is described, in the blurb, as an adventure program for children.

Not knowing quite what to expect, I slipped the cassette into the tape deck, and absent-mindedly started to load the program.

The lounge was starting to get dark, being lit only by the glinting of tinsel and paper chains for Easter. Enough of mind-wondering. The instructions have finished loading.

The adventure comes in two parts. The first is on board your ship, which is sailing the "seven seas me hearties!" Part two takes place on a secret island, but more of that later.

While sailing around in part one, you will face various difficulties, such as torn sails, men overboard or a leaky hull. You can also find yourself becalmed or even shipwrecked.

There are other pirate ships to be fought and captured, but beware — if you are defeated you will be made to walk the plank.

You will find several islands on your travels, one of which has a mysterious black cat, which, with very little persuasion will tell you its name. Remember this as you can't get into part two without it.

This is either a very fickle feline or it has an identity crisis because it has a different name each time you play.

On finding Treasure Island I was attacked by an old man that I presume must have been Ben Gunn.

One island contains a dragon, which must, of course, be slain. At this point, if you have amassed enough jewels and can remember the name of your new pet, you can proceed to part two.

You find yourself in a harbour of a strange island. The cat tells you that its master is a king who is held captive by Blackbeard somewhere on the island. Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to rescue the king.

It is well worth making a map of the island as you go, as you will undoubtedly die several times by falling off cliffs, being killed by Blackbeard's pirates or in forest fires.

When you die, you start back at the harbour again.

To keep your strength up, you can eat when you find banana trees, and the opportunity may present itself for a nice piece of roast pork.

Once you have tracked him down, you must kill Blackbeard to release an extremely grateful king.

So, to sum up, Pirate has some nifty little tunes, but they become a bit repetitive, and the graphics are very basic.

The only responses required by the program are the four directional keys plus Y and N.

Pirate did not really capture my imagination, but then it isn't really intended to. I don't think it will be challenging enough for anyone but younger children. Overall, I would say that it is not good value at £9.25. **PM**





Everest hopes dashed

Simulation *Everest* **Micro** *Dragon 32* **Price** *£7.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Salamander Software, 17 Norfolk Rd, Brighton, East Sussex*.

AS THE words "Regret Hank died during night" came up on the screen, I leaned back from the keyboard. The expedition was over. The hopes of so many men had been dashed by an error of judgement concerning the distribution of food. We had failed to conquer Everest.

This game (complete with video-type case) is one of the latest offerings from Salamander Software, who have now grown to be one of the most reputable software houses to produce Dragon programs.

Everest is a simulation of mountaineering.

The player has the choice of tackling any one of three peaks (Nuptse, Lhotse or Everest) and the choice of Spring or Autumn (in Autumn the weather conditions are worse).

After choosing these, the climbers for the day must be picked, and then loads allocated. If they have more to carry, or are forced to go without food, they become weaker, and three climbers dead means that the expedition is called off.

At the end a rating is given, which may either be a rude comment or a numerical representation of how well the player has done, depending on how good he or she is.

To accompany the rating there are a transferable host of other features, including a hi-res display of the actual climb, transferable to any climber, which all add to the overall enjoyment.

Everest is all BASIC, but don't be put off, because it must be one of the best simulations I have seen for the Dragon.

Judging by the realism of the game, Everest has obviously been well thought out, and the author has put a lot of effort into making it real. The instruction booklet reads well because whatever the program may be, it is not user friendly.

I liked this game, and I am sure that many a would-be Chris Bonnington would enjoy spending the long winter nights in front of the fire climbing Everest. **MG**



Limited space flight

Simulation *Space Shuttle* **Micros** *BBC B, Atari 16K, Tandy Colour, Spectrum 48K, Dragon, Electron, CBM 64, Oric*. **Price** *£8.00* **Format** *Cassette*

Micros *CBM 64, BBC B, Atari.* **Price** *£9.99* **Format** *Disk* **Supplier** *Microdeal, 41 Truro Rd, St Austell, Cornwall.*

HAVING BEEN treated to a welter of television advertising for this program I looked forward to seeing it.

The simulator comes with a 14-page flight manual containing the mission plan and control instructions for your flight.

The mission is to launch yourself successfully into orbit, fetch a malfunctioning satellite by parking next to it and then retrieving the device with your remote control arm.

After the satellite is safely stored, close the bay doors, fire retros and begin re-entry. Fly into a final approach window and perform a mock landing flare. Then start your final approach to the runway resulting in a safe landing.

The program is split into three main phases take-off, park and re-entry.

Before take-off the player is given the weather conditions for the proposed landing site: wind strength, direction, cloud ceiling and so on.

The take-off, plus some other parts of the simulation, are carried out under auto control where you may relax and look out of the window at the disappearing mountains.

Keyboard or joysticks may be used to control the flight into orbit and the parking alongside the satellite.

The retrieval of the wayward Sputnik is carried out by means means of an arm which is manoeuvred out of the bay until it touches the satellite and held in contact until it locks.

Having retracted the arm and stowed everything away, the player may activate the re-entry sequence and try to navigate to the landing strip.

There are few controls to master, and just as few instruments in this package. The many aircraft simulators already available appear to be more sophisticated than this program.

The graphics shown through the window are white, flickering and crude. As this program is available for a number of micros I can only assume that it has been restricted by the limitations imposed on it by the other poorer systems it is designed to run on.

BBC micro users, who are used to much better, are not liable to be over impressed by much in this game.

Whether it be the childishly simple retrieval sequence or the blackout phase, where my interest also blacked out. **AM**▷

Persistence brings rewards

Adventure *Krystals of Zong* **Micro** *Commodore 64* **Price** *£7.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *PSS, 452 Stoney Stanton Rd, Coventry.*

THE OBJECT of this game is to collect treasures while avoiding the various nasties that pursue you.

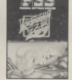
The game is played within a series of nine rooms. These are arranged in a three-by-three matrix, and are numbered one to nine.

Room five is in the middle of the matrix, and it is from here that each game begins.

Each room consists of a maze, with a treasure compartment at its centre. There also are exit doors to the immediately adjacent rooms.

The treasure compartment of each room is protected by a lock. Scattered throughout the rooms are the nine keys that unlock the treasure compartments. The game lists all the keys held by the player.

The keys are colour coded to



match the border area of the room to which each particular key applies. For example, room one has a purple surrounding. To open its treasure compartment it is necessary to find the purple key.

To prevent you doing this there are assorted snakes, bats and other nasties which pursue and attempt to kill you.

You are allowed five lives, and are provided with a sword in each room with which to fight off your pursuers.

There are eight levels of play. At each level one of the treasures is a ladder that enables you to climb to the next level. The speed and complexity of the game increases as each new level is reached.

As well as building up your score, some of the treasures help you in your fight with the pursuers.

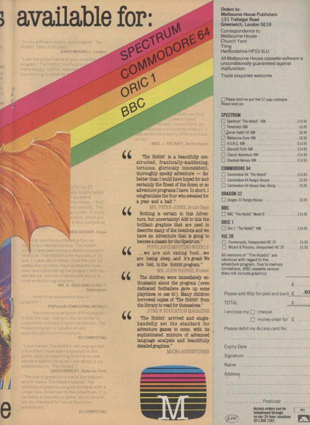
For example, there are a pair of elven boots that enable you to move much faster than your pursuers.

This game borders on the addictive. There are excellent graphics and the complexity varies enough throughout the eight levels to appeal to players of widely differing abilities.

My particular version was not completely bug-proof, but that is my only criticism of an otherwise excellent game. **RJ**



The Hobbit. Now the best is
"After a very short time I found that 'The Hobbit' was becoming almost a way of life rather than a game, and so when I finished it for the first time I was partly sad because I felt that all the fun and adventure had ended, but I was wrong. Even now I am discovering new things about the game and feel that it will be some time until all of its secrets are revealed to me."
MR. J. STERN, Herts
"I have at last received your 'Hobbit' program and would like to congratulate you on its excellence. After four days of sweat and tears I have completed only 37.5 per cent of the adventure. The program has lived up completely to expectations, and there is no doubt about it being the best production for the Spectrum to date.
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SINCLAIR USER
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GORDON DEMPTSTER, Scotland
"Thanks again for an excellent game in 'The Hobbit'. I feel I have really got my money's worth out of playing time. Congratulations!"
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"The most powerful computer game yet invented."
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"Within my circle of friends this game has become something of an obsession. We meet every Friday night at someone's house and spend 3-4 hours on 'The Hobbit'. Friday night would not be the same without 'The Hobbit'."
CHRISTINE VERCHILD, Wilts
"One new Adventure game stands head and shoulders above the rest. It alone almost provides you with a good enough reason to buy a 48K Sinclair Spectrum. Not only does The Hobbit produce drawings of the main scenes, but it also understands proper sentences rather than pairs of words for its commands. It comes with a copy of J.R.R. Tolkien's classic book of the same name. It is the program with the most detailed and best written documentation ever."
WHAT MICRO
"This is an impressively packaged Adventure game which makes good use of the Spectrum's colour graphics. They have not only produced one of the best games for the Spectrum, but given everyone else a lesson in good game design."
"I am the owner of a copy of 'The Hobbit' which is wonderful entertainment, and very challenging. I have other tapes and publications of yours, all of which are excellent."
MR. D.J. BURGH, Kent
"Having received the most excellent piece of programming I have ever seen, we have had no social life whatsoever. 'The Hobbit' has been dominating our lives since January and many nights have been spent until 3 o'clock trying to conquer it."
SIMON ROGERS, Avon
The Hobbit
Melbourne House



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BBC
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DAVID MAXWELL, London
MRS. J. RYCROFT, Northampton
"'The Hobbit' is a beautifully constructed, frantically-maddening, tortuous, gloriously inconsistent, thoroughly spooky adventure — far better than I could have hoped for and certainly the finest of the dozen or so adventure programs I have. In short, I congratulate the four who sweated for a year and a half."
MR. PETER JONES, South Glam
"Nothing is certain in this Adventure, but uncertainty! Add to this the brilliant graphics that are used to describe many of the locations and we have an Adventure that is going to become a classic for the Spectrum."
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Battling a colour problem

War game *Paris in Danger* **Micro** *Atari 400/800 48K* **Price** *£28.95* **Format** *Disk* **Supplier** *Avalon Hill Game Company, 650 High Rd, North Finchley.*

THE DATE is 1814 and Paris is in danger. Napoleon has to defend Paris against numerically superior Allied troops.

Paris in Danger, from Avalon Hill, recreates the campaign in detail. This is a two-player game, and there are the remnants of a fine simulation here. Unfortunately, the game is made almost unplayable because Avalon Hill have used an Atari feature known as artifacting to create a map.

Artifacting allows the Atari to display more than one colour on its hi-res display mode. This works very well on American NTSC televisions but not on our PAL system. What are blues and reds on the American standard are just funny coloured lines on ours.

As far as Paris in Danger is concerned this makes things awkward. The whole game hinges around how many towns each army has under its control. The towns are coloured red and blue, as are the various armies concerned.

Artifacting makes these towns indistinguishable from each other. A separate record has to be kept on a piece of paper if you want to keep track of who controls what. That aside, Paris in Danger is the start of a superb system of war games on computer (another, Waterloo, is soon to follow).

Paris in Danger combines strategic and tactical systems in one game. Initially corps-sized units are moved around a large scale map of France. If a unit meets with the enemy the players are given the chance to move onto a small scale tactical map with division-sized units or let the computer adjudicate the combat.

The strategic map is approximately six screens in size. Using a joystick means that you can scroll around the map quite quickly.

Each unit is supplied with orders for the forthcoming week. One move for each day plus an extra move for force-marching. When two opposing units meet the computer will ask if you want it to resolve the combat or if you want to go to the tactical map.

Computer adjudication is a lot quicker. Average game time using the tactical map display can be upwards of five hours. Using the computer cuts this to around three.

The small scale tactical map displays at random, bridges, forests and towns as well as the units involved. Each unit can be formed up in any of four formations. These are line, column, mixed and square.

Each type of formation will change the way in which the unit fights. For instance, fighting in line inflicts maximum casualties but is very vulnerable to flank and cavalry attack. Column gives the optimum movement allowance, but it drastically affects the amount of firepower a unit can bring to bear.

The tactical system makes playing Paris in Danger almost enjoyable, but once again Avalon Hill have not taken into account the change in TV systems.

The background colour for the map is dark grey. On my television I had to alter all the controls to even see the units on the map. Once I returned to the strategic map they all had to be altered back.

Strategy tips: the French player must engage in battle as frequently as possible. His objective is to obtain 60 points by killing 45,000 allied soldiers.

The Allied strategy is to avoid battle at all cost and take as many of the towns as possible. The player should never fight at odds of less than two to one if he can help it.

Although numerically superior the Allied troops are not as well trained or lead as the French troops and they will take a hammering at odds of less than two to one.

On the tactical map the best plan is to form your troops into line formation and protect the flanks by anchoring the formation on woods or rivers. Cavalry must be used only when an enemy division is in trouble and it's morale is low. When this happens send in the cavalry and try to force a break in the line. If you get through

One man's Medea is another's . . .

Adventure *Crypt of Medea* **Micros** *Apple II+, IIe, III* **Format** *Disk* **Supplier** *Sir-Tech, Ogdensburg, New York.*

STUDENTS of mythology may remember Medea as the princess who helped Jason in Colchis, but she was a fairly nasty piece of work too. Now you're stuck in her crypt with death awaiting you at every turn, and your task is (not surprisingly) to escape.

Crypt of Medea is a hi-res adventure game that has several tunes and some animation in addition to the normal graphics and text.

It's described as "an adventure game for the very mature and strong of heart", probably because the descriptions of many of the rooms refer to blood, dismembered bodies, and general gore. It's not exactly a video nasty, though. If you've ever tried to draw realistically on the Apple's hi-res screen, you'll know why.

It is a medium-sized game with a very linear feel to it. In most cases you have to solve one puzzle before you can proceed to the next, and there is not much scope for exploratory roaming. In fact, when the game starts you are in a room with no visible exits. This isn't a problem, though, because the manual talks you through the first few puzzles to illustrate play.

The manual contains a few extras which make this game a bit different. For example, a list of key words is given so that you don't have difficulty in being understood.

Although nouns aren't given, even a list of the admissable verbs contain hints. For example, why should the program recognise uncork if you don't have to use it? Personally, we enjoy having to develop a working relationship with a game by exploring its vocabulary.

Listed also but preceded by a warning of their presence, are hints and a list of answers to the hints.

This list of answers uses a coding system so that you don't see more than the answer you want. The inclusion of hints and answers is a two-edged sword.

There is a temptation to peek when stuck, but doing so detracts from the feeling of satisfaction that comes from solving the puzzle. It's also hard not to catch a glimpse of the next hint since they are all on the same page.

In play, the game differs from the usual format by displaying only the graphics screen until you type something. At this point, a full text screen appears, containing the description of the room, the visible objects and exits, and a prompt for your command. The Esc key can be used to toggle between graphics and text, but no mixed mode is used.

Convenience controls allow you to stay in text mode, switch the sounds off, and also produce speech if you have a Mockingboard fitted. Unfortunately, my SAM board isn't equivalent to a Mokingboard, so I can't comment on the nature of the program's spoken output.

Up to nine games can be saved on an initialised disk, so there's a lot of disk-swapping, particularly in the early stages where you get killed so often.

Crypt of Medea is of about average size and average difficulty. It is an interesting change to the wizards-and-magic-swords variety of adventure game.

After giving us Wizardry, Star Maze and Police Artist, Sir-Tech have a difficult task in maintaining the high standard, and it would seem that they've not quite succeeded with this one. **CM, DM**

circle around and hit the enemy in the rear.

Apart from the artifacting and the poor choice of map colour this game remains as one of the best computer war games I have seen. It does need two players though and if the two of you can sit through five hours of computer punching all well and good.

The game system is excellent and I look forward to seeing more games of this calibre. I can only hope that Avalon Hill will think again about artifacting their map displays and include the computer as an opponent.

The game manual, by the way, is very good and includes a number of pages of historical background to get you in the mood. **RS**

Shelley's monster returns

Adventure *Castle Frankenstein* **Micros** *BBC B, Electron* **Price** *£7.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Epic Software, 10 Gladstone St, Kibworth, Beauchamp, Leics.*

CASTLE Frankenstein is the first in a series of three adventures for the BBC from Epic Software. They are all text-only adventures of the classical type.

The game comes with a rather poor cassette-sleeve insert. For the seasoned adventurer the more florid and comprehensive the packaging the better, since it all helps to stimulate the imagination and whet the appetite for the game proper. Instead, all you get is a folded card, half of which is an advertisement for the other two Epic games.

Once the game has loaded things do brighten up considerably and the writers show some ingenuity both in the description of locations and in setting up the inevitable puzzles which must be overcome.

You, the player, have been chosen to solve the mystery of Castle Frankenstein. The monster, thought to have died in a fire 20 years earlier, seems to have been reincarnated and is being held responsible for a number of unsolved murders in the area.

There is a vast area to explore, with more than 200 locations: in the castle ruins and grounds, with all the usual obstacles, tunnels and secret psssages, as well as the rather more unusual sulphur pits and graveyard. You travel through all these with the object of finding, and ultimately destroying, the monster.

I must admit, after several hours sweating over the keyboard, over many days (a SAVE facility is provided) and ploughing through reams of text, I have not yet succeeded in my task.

As for the mechanics of the game: complete sentences are understood, although usually only the first two or three letters are required, and the vocabulary is about average amounting to 140 words. Overall, nice game, shame about the packaging. **GW**



A code of chivalry maintained

Adventure *The Quest for the Holy Grail* **Micro** *BBC B* **Price** *£8.45* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Epic Software, 10 Gladstone St, Kibworth Beuchamp, Leics.*

WHAT ELSE would Epic Software produce but adventure games? So one would expect that their products live up to the company name.

The cassette insert mentions 'sophisticated compression techniques' and 'ordinary English sentences' (for input). All three of Epic's adventures are in machine code.

After the title sequence the instructions are loaded. From these you learn that to become a fully-fledged knight of the Round Table, King Arthur insists that you bring the Holy Grail back to Camelot.

Some of the program's more common words are listed. It is unusual to see a separate instructions program with an adventure, but very welcome.

Following the instructions comes the adventure. It opens with a brief summary of what you are supposed to be doing, in case you had forgotten during the loading time.

The first location is the top of a hill outside Camelot with a view of the surrounding landscape. The description for this place is the longest I have found, all others being disappointingly short.

There are about 230 locations, but they certainly are not 'fully described'. I found that there was a feeling of not really believing the adventure, which partly results from this lack of description.

In early explorations of the surroundings the most common message given is: 'You cannot go there'. Movement is restricted to the point of frustration. Once you begin map-making, however, you can start to concentrate on the puzzles (there are plenty).

Other characters are around, guarding objects and, in the case of the various knights, drawing their swords menacingly.

There seemed to be no random aspect in the behaviour of the characters, presumably due to the strong chivalric code of medieval times.

This adventure includes some pleasing touches, such as the odd humourous line and unexpected response. The use of colour in Teletext mode is something more adventure programmers should attempt.

Response times are extremely quick, and there is the fastest save to tape of position I have seen. Despite minor shortcomings this is a well thought out and enjoyable game. **MW** □

A witch hits the bottle

Adventure *The Kingdom of Klein* **Micro** *BBC 32K* **Price** *£7.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Epic Software, 10 Gladstone Street, Kibworth, Beauchamp, Leicester.*

THE WICKED Witch has stolen the Magic Klein Bottle from its pedestal in the palace.

She swore that she would put a hideous curse on anybody who was foolish enough to try to recover it. Your task . . . etc.

This is a fairly standard text-only adventure. The text is displayed in coloured lettering, yellow for the straw in the stables, blue for the lake.

As I became stuck fairly early on in the game I decided to cheat — not for my own sake you understand, but for yours.

The game writer had anticipated this move however, and the only text I could find was a message telling me I was wasting my time trying to cheat.

After much blood, sweat, toil and help from the wife I managed to cross the lake. The far side of the lake is a minefield of forest mazes and deadly mountain paths, which threw me to my doom countless times (too many for my liking).

The game incorporates the usual SAVE and LOAD options plus full sentence and abbreviated word commands. There are approximately 230 locations to explore and the game is disk compatible.

The game is made difficult by the many death-dealing traps and mazes that appear to be inescapable.

The locations are the standard forests, mountain caves and palaces populated by evil demons, giants and witches. So far I have found little use for the Bible which I can neither open or seek help from, although after a few hours lost in the forest I seriously considered prayer as the only way out.

There appears to be many hours of puzzles and enjoyment in this game but it has few new twists. I did get tired of being killed by the mindless inhabitants.

Perhaps fewer rooms and more humour would have kept me more interested, still it is on a par for most adventures of this type. **AM**



Get ready to play in the role of your life

Bob Collman traces the development of role-playing games

DURING THE middle 1970's a visiting friend from the States introduced me to Dungeons and Dragons. It was different from anything I had played before and I later found out it was the first of a new type of game, called role-playing.

It should be pointed out, since there seems to be some confusion, that Dungeons and Dragons is a specific game published by TSR and not a generic term for role-playing games. There are a large number of such systems on the market and although D and D is the oldest and best known, it is merely one of the many available.

Computer adventure games are an attempt to use a machine rather than a human as moderator. Although adventures are rapidly improving, they still often have more in common with crossword puzzles than role-playing.

The first adventures were text only and dealt with two word sentences. The latest allow more complex sentences, have interaction between characters and include moving graphics. Although good and getting better, they are still a long way from the complexity and fun of a group of players and a referee.

The idea of role-playing is to create a fictional character using random numbers to determine basic human characteristics such as a size, strength, intelligence and dexterity. This character is then padded out with a suitable background and personality, given a name and then controlled by the player who created him or her.

Set of rules

A referee runs the game and plays the parts of all non-player characters. The referee decides on the success or failure of player actions by using die rolls, based on that particular character's abilities and experience. Characters increase their skills through experience.

When you purchase a role-playing game you usually get a set of rules which govern the generation and control of characters in the particular fantasy world the rules attempt to simulate. You may also get an initial scenario to introduce characters to this world. If you then wish to continue playing the game the referee will have to buy further scenarios or write his own.

Choosing a role-playing system is somewhat like choosing a computer, the software (scenarios) may, in the long run, cost more than the hardware (rules) and scenarios are not much more portable between rule systems than programs are between computers. It, therefore, pays to choose a system carefully.

I will briefly mention some of the role-playing games on the market to give you an idea of the variety available. There are many more role-playing systems but I will cover only the ones with which I have experience.

Dungeons and Dragons (TSR): The world of D and D is medieval fantasy with powerful magic. The adventures are often the detailed exploration of dangerous and booby-trapped dungeons, towers or other confined areas. Characters must watch their every step and be on guard mentally.

The emphasis of the game is often on problem solving. The combat system is relatively simple and as a consequence not especially realistic or challenging but at least does not slow up the game — magic is more potent than brute strength anyway. Because of D and D popularity there are a huge number of available scenarios catering for a variety of tastes.

Runequest (Avalon Hill): characters in Runequest inhabit an Iron Age culture, reminiscent of an early Mediterranean society. Magic is present but no overwhelming and physical skills are very important. Combat is detailed, realistic, fun and slow, but likely to occur far less frequently than D and D.

Generally, Runequest games tend to place more emphasis on personalities and human interaction. The rules allow for the building of balanced characters and not merely stereotypes, such as fighter and wizard. There are many excellent campaigns and scenarios for this system.

Traveller (Game Designers Workshop): this is currently the most popular science fiction role-playing system and makes a bit of an attempt to stay within the realm of hard science, although this isn't rigidly adhered to if bending the laws of physics adds to the fun.

Traveller has an elaborate system of die rolls to allow characters to receive education and training before being used in a game. I have known some people to be so enamoured with developing characters for this game that they never get around to playing it. There are mountains of literature pertaining to the system.

Star Frontiers (TSR): a recent entry into science fiction with more emphasis on humour than fact. The rules are more consistent than Traveller and probably more fun, but there are only a few scenarios available so far.

Top Secret (TSR): this is your chance to be a spy. Although I like the subject the scenarios tend to be more related to commando raids than spying and the game is let down by the inconsistency of the ▷

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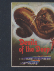
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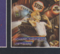


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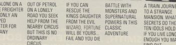
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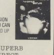
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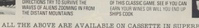
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rules. There are rules for everything and although most of them work, they are difficult to remember and slow down the game.

Call of Cthulhu (Chaosium): the most difficult thing about this one is pronouncing the name (which I believe is Cuh-thoo-loo). It takes place in the 1920s and the characters become involved in investigating mysteries, usually involving the occult.

The rules are excellent and characters travel the world slowly (it's 1922) tracking down men who are using magic to harness alien forces for their own ends.

Characters must use their wits and investigative skills to stop the culprits before they become too powerful to combat. Player characters can be anything the referee allows but a few favourites are reporter, private investigator, university professor, dilettante.

I find it refreshing to play a normal person rather than a sword-wielding barbarian. Call of Cthulhu is based on the writings of H P Lovecraft, who has been described as a cross between Edgar Allen Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle. There are already at least five excellent scenario booklets for this system.

Easy to write

Once a role-playing system has been chosen computers can be of assistance before and during the game. Computers small enough to share a table with several players will likely become increasingly important during games. For example, the accompanying program contains a die-rolling routine that would allow the referee to dispense with dice. For those of us with large computers, generating new characters for a forthcoming game can be quite useful — the program also gives a glimpse of the ease of writing this type of program.

You might enjoy writing your own assistance programs and they are certainly much easier for a beginner than writing an adventure. The examples both demonstrate the use of a function in BBC BASIC (FNroll) to give any die roll called for in a role-playing game, including additions or subtractions.

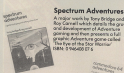
Role-playing games often use a variety of dice to generate exactly the odds the designer wished to produce. 20- 10-, eight-, six- and four-sided dice are commonly used. The rules usually refer to the number of sides of the dice you are to throw and how many. This abbreviated by giving the number of dice followed by D (for dice) and the number of sides. For example, throwing two, six-sided dice (as in craps) would be abbreviated as 2D6.

In many BASICs this would be written RND(6) + RND(6). Sometimes, there is an addition or subtraction to the dice roll, such as 3D8 + 4. In BASIC this would be RND(8) + RND(8) + RND(8) + 4. FNroll (line 390 in the example) can be added to any BBC BASIC program to handle all dice rolls. One dice-rolling routine, called whenever needed, can save lots of duplication, especially for character-generator programs. □

```
5 REM Demonstrates two uses of a dice-rolling function
10 REM By Ron Collman
30 MODE 7
40 X=RND(-TIME):REM (RANDOMIZE)
50 REPEAT
60   PRINTTAB(0,10)"1. Example one - dice-rolling routine."
70   PRINTTAB(0,12)"2. Example two - Character Generator."
80   PRINTTAB(5,14)"Your choice (1 or 2)?"
90   REPEAT:choice=GET-48:UNTIL choice=1 OR choice=2
100  IFchoice=1 PROCrollroutine ELSE PROCcreate
110  UNTIL FALSE
120
130 DEF PROCrollroutine
140 REPEAT:CLS
150   PRINTTAB(14,2)"Dice Rolling"
160   INPUTTAB(0,8)"How many dice?"TAB(25)number
170   INPUTTAB(0,10)"How many sides per die?"TAB(25)sides
180   REM Note in line below that a function can be printed as if a variable
190   PRINTTAB(0,12)"The total is:";TAB(25);FNroll(number,sides,0)
200   INPUTTAB(0,23)"Press RETURN to continue"d
210   UNTIL FALSE
220 ENDPROC
230
240 DEF PROCcreate
250 REPEAT:RESTORE
260   CLS:PRINTTAB(12,2)"Runequest Dwarf"
270   FORindex=1TO7
280     READcharacteristic$,dice,sides,adds
290     PRINTTAB(5,index+5)characteristic$;TAB(20);FNroll(dice,sides,adds)
300     NEXT
310   INPUTTAB(0,23)"Press RETURN to continue"d
320   UNTILFALSE
330 ENDPROC
340 REM Data for a Runequest dwarf
350 DATA Strength,4,6,0,Constitution,2,6,6,Size,[illegible],Intelligence,3,6,0,Power,3,6,0,Dexterity,3,6,0,Charisma,3,6,0
360
370 REM ******************************
380
390 REM GENERAL DICE-ROLLING ROUTINE
400 DEF FNroll(number_of_dice,number_of_sides,adjustments)
410 total=0
420 FORroll=1TOnumber_of_dice
430   total=total+RND(number_of_sides)
440   NEXT
450 =total+adjustments
```


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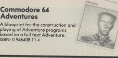
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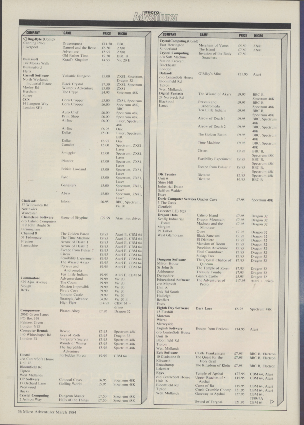
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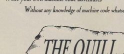
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Atari: the programs will run on either the Atari 400 or 800 unless E is specified, in which case extra memory is needed on the 400.

BBC: the programs will run on either of the BBC micros unless the model B is specified, in which case extra memory is needed on the model A.

Drives: if a program needs a disk drive system this is specified in the micro column.

Spectrum: the programs will run on either Spectrum.

ZX81: All programs need a 16K RAM pack. □

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YOUR ADVENTURES

Spectrum quest in graphics

S A Wilkinson from Manor Park has written a graphic adventure called Quest for the Spectrum ***(this page)****. The task set for the player is to find five precious keys hidden somewhere in a maze which also conceals cities, weapons, dragons and ogres.*

From S A Wilkinson in Manor Park

QUEST IS a graphic adventure based on a random maze for the Spectrum. Dotted around the maze are cities, ruins, weapons, dragons and ogres. The player will also find gold with the help of a few magical spells. All these are designed to either aid or obstruct you from achieving your goal, which is to find five special keys.

At the end of the listing there is, for your interest, a screen display. The program structure is: 10-18 variables, 20-95 sets up screen border, 500-530 puts trees, rocks and swamps onto the playing area, 530-600 puts in random incidents, 810 prints exit door, 820-826 prints city, 830 positions key, 1005-1006 monster's movements, 1010-1060 moves man, 1100-1540 incident determining procedures.

Incidents: 2000 puts key on screen, checks number found, 2200 — various objects hidden or visible in the city, 2400 sends dragon after man, 2600 sends ogre after man, 2800 — weapon routine, 3000 — the final spell, 3200 — gold randomly distributed, 3800 — use of weapons, 4000 — killed, 7000 — graphics, 9000 — random maze, 9900 — ends sequence. □

```
   1 REM [illegible]
   2 GO SUB 105
   3 LET u=2: LET v=2
   4 CLS : BORDER 1: PAPER 7
   5 GO SUB 7000: GO TO 9000
  10 LET du=2
  12 LET dv=2
  13 LET ou=2
  14 LET ov=2
  17 LET dr=0
  18 LET og=0
  20 FOR n=1 TO 31
  30 PRINT AT 0,n; INK 2; PAPER
4; BRIGHT 1;"0"
  40 PRINT AT 16,n; INK 2; PAPER
 4; BRIGHT 1;"0"
  50 NEXT n
  60 FOR n=0 TO 16
  70 PRINT AT n,0; INK 2; PAPER
4; BRIGHT 1;"0"
  80 PRINT AT n,31; INK 2; PAPER
 4; BRIGHT 1;"0"
  90 NEXT n
  95 PRINT "KEYS    GOLD   "''"S
PELLS    WEAPONS   "
  99 GO SUB 500: GO SUB 810
 100 GO TO 1000
 105 LET K$=""
 140 LET S$=""
 150 LET W$=""
 160 LET G=0
 400 RETURN
 500 FOR s=1 TO 80
 510 LET d=INT (RND*4)+1
 520 LET Q$="FGHI"
 530 PRINT AT RND*14+1,RND*29+1;
Q$(d)
 540 NEXT s
 550 FOR N=1 TO 10
 560 LET p((RND*10)+2,(RND*20)+5
)=3
 570 LET p((RND*10)+2,(RND*20)+5
)=4
 580 LET p((RND*10)+2,(RND*20)+5
)=5
 590 LET p((RND*10)+2,(RND*20)+5
)=6
 600 NEXT N
 610 RETURN
 700 RETURN
 810 PRINT AT 14,29; INK 0;"K"
 820 LET tx=INT (RND*10)+2: LET
ty=INT (RND*10)+10: IF p(tx,ty)=
0 THEN GO TO 820
 825 PRINT INK 0;AT tx,ty;"LJL"
 826 LET p(tx,ty)=4: LET p(tx,ty
+1)=3: LET p(tx,ty+2)=4
 830 LET t=RND*20
```

Send us your adventure listings — modules which readers can incorporate into their own games, short adventures and useful programming routines are all welcome. Please send us a printout and cassette along with a general description of the program and details of how it is constructed and can be used. If you want us to return your program, enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. If you have any queries on the listings, write to the appropriate author, Your Adventures, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

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* ZX81 Chart
Home Computing Weekly 1.8.83 and 1.11.83.

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```
 831 LET kx=INT (RND*10)+2
 832 LET ky=INT (RND*20)+5
 840 IF t>5 AND p(kx,ky)<>0 THEN
 LET p(kx,ky)=2
 850 RETURN
1000 PRINT AT u,v;" "
1005 IF dr=1 THEN GO SUB 2400
1006 IF og=1 THEN GO SUB 2600
1010 IF INKEY$="5" AND p(u,v-1)<
>0 THEN LET v=v-1: GO TO 1060
1020 IF INKEY$="8" AND p(u,v+1)<
>0 THEN LET v=v+1: GO TO 1060
1030 IF INKEY$="6" AND p(u+1,v)<
>0 THEN LET u=u+1: GO TO 1060
1040 IF INKEY$="7" AND p(u-1,v)<
>0 THEN LET u=u-1: GO TO 1060
1050 BEEP .1,10
1060 PRINT AT u,v;"A"
1080 PRINT AT 18,5-LEN K$;K$;AT
18,9;G;AT 20,5-LEN S$;S$;AT 20,1
5-LEN W$;W$
1100 IF INKEY$="f" THEN GO SUB 3
800
1110 IF INKEY$="s" THEN GO SUB 3
900
1200 IF u=14 AND v=29 THEN PRINT
 AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"        PREPA
RE TO JUMP          ": GO TO 3
1500 IF p(u,v)=2 THEN GO SUB 200
0
1510 IF p(u,v)=3 THEN GO SUB 220
0
1520 IF p(u,v)=4 THEN IF RND>.1
THEN GO SUB 3200: IF RND<=.1 THE
N GO SUB 4000
1530 IF p(u,v)=5 THEN IF RND>.5
THEN GO SUB 2800: IF RND<=.5 THE
N GO SUB 3000
1540 IF p(u,v)=6 THEN IF RND>.5
THEN GO SUB 2400: IF RND<=.5 THE
N GO SUB 2600
1700 GO TO 1000
1900 GO TO 1000
2000 REM KEY ROUTINE
2005 IF LEN K$=5 THEN GO TO 9900
2010 LET k$="M"
2020 LET K$=K$+k$
2030 PRINT AT 18,5-LEN K$;K$
2040 LET p(u,v)=1
2050 RETURN
2200 REM CITY ROUTINE
2210 LET C=RND
2220 IF C<.1 THEN PRINT AT 16,0;
 FLASH 1;"  HOSTILE CITY YOU'RE
KILLED!!  ": FOR n=1 TO 50: NEXT
 n: GO TO 4000
2230 IF C>=.1 AND C<.4 THEN PRIN
T AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"      WEAPON
S SALE NOW ON       ": LET p(u,v
)=1: LET G=G-50: FOR n=1 TO 50:
NEXT n: GO TO 2800
2240 IF C>=.4 AND C<.55 THEN PRI
NT AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"       FRIE
NDLY WIZARD          ": LET p(u,
v)=1: FOR n=1 TO 50: NEXT n: GO
TO 3000
2250 IF C>=.7 AND C<.9 THEN PRIN
T AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"     RUINS
 FIND GOLD !!         ": LET p(u,v)
=1: FOR n=1 TO 50: NEXT n: GO TO
 3200
2260 IF C>=.9 THEN PRINT AT 16,0
; FLASH 1;"      BEWARE      DRAG
ON !!        ": LET p(u,v)=1: GO T
O 2400
2400 REM DRAGON ROUTINE
2405 LET dr=1
2410 PRINT AT du,dv;" "
2430 IF RND>.5 THEN GO SUB 2500
2440 PRINT AT du,dv; INK 2;"C"
2450 RETURN
2500 LET du=du+(u>du)-(u<du)
2510 LET dv=dv+(v>dv)-(v<dv)
2515 IF du=u AND dv=v THEN PRINT
 AT 16,0; FLASH 1;" YOU ARE KILL
ED BY THE DRAGON  !": FOR n=1 TO
 50: NEXT n: GO TO 4000
2518 IF p(du,dv)=0 THEN GO TO 25
00
2520 RETURN
2600 REM OGRE ROUTINE
2605 LET og=1
2610 PRINT AT ou,ov;" "
2630 IF RND>.5 THEN GO SUB 2700
2640 PRINT AT ou,ov; INK 2;"B"
2650 RETURN
2700 LET ou=ou+(u>ou)-(u<ou)
2710 LET ov=ov+(v>ov)-(v<ov)
2715 IF ou=u AND ov=v THEN PRINT
 AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"   YOU ARE KI
LLED BY THE OGRE !!": FOR n=1 TO
 50: NEXT n: GO TO 4000
2718 IF p(ou,ov)=0 THEN GO TO 27
00
2720 RETURN
2800 REM WEAPON GAIN ROUTINE
2805 IF LEN W$>=4 THEN RETURN
2810 LET w=INT (RND*3)+1
2815 LET p(u,v)=1
2820 LET A$="DE↑"
2830 LET W$=W$+A$(w)
2840 PRINT AT 20,15-LEN W$;W$
2850 LET p(u,v)=1
2855 PRINT AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"
YOU GAIN A WEAPON              "
2860 RETURN
3000 REM SPELL GAIN ROUTINE
3005 IF LEN S$>=4 THEN RETURN
3010 LET s=INT (RND*3)+1
3015 LET p(u,v)=1
3020 LET B$="OP*"
3030 LET S$=S$+B$(s)
3040 PRINT AT 20,5-LEN S$;S$
3050 LET p(u,v)=1
3055 PRINT AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"
 YOU GAIN A SPELL !            "
3060 RETURN
3200 REM FIND GOLD ROUTINE
3205 LET p(u,v)=1
3210 LET g=INT (t*50)
3220 LET G=G+g
3235 PRINT AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"
YOU FIND SOME GOLD             "
3240 LET p(u,v)=1
3250 RETURN
3800 REM USE WEAPON ROUTINE
3810 IF du=u+1 OR du=u-1 OR dv=v
+1 OR dv=v-1 THEN GO TO 3850
3815 IF ou=u+1 OR ou=u-1 OR ov=v
+1 OR ov=v-1 THEN GO TO 3820
3817 RETURN
3820 FOR n=1 TO LEN W$: IF W$(n)
="D" THEN GO TO 3830: NEXT n
3825 RETURN
3830 PRINT AT u,v+1;"D"
3831 LET og=0: PRINT AT ou,ov;"
"
3832 LET ou=1: LET ov=1
3835 PRINT AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"
   YOU KILLED THE OGRE!          "
3840 LET a$=""
3841 LET W$=a$
3842 PRINT AT 20,10;"          "
3845 RETURN
3850 FOR n=1 TO LEN W$: IF W$(n)
="↑" THEN GO TO 3860
3855 RETURN
3860 FOR n=1 TO LEN W$: IF W$(n)
="E" THEN GO TO 3870
3865 RETURN
3870 PRINT AT u,v-1;"E";AT u,v+1
;"↑"
3875 LET dr=0: PRINT AT du,dv;"
"
3880 PRINT AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"
YOU KILLED THE DRAGON          "
3885 FOR n=1 TO 100: NEXT n
3890 PRINT AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"
COLLECT THE BOUNTY            ";
FOR n=1 TO 100: NEXT n
3892 LET a$=""
3893 LET W$=a$
3894 PRINT AT 20,10;"          "
3895 GO SUB 3200: RETURN
3900 REM USE SPELL ROUTINE
3910 PRINT AT 16,0;"          WHICH
  SPELL?          "
3915 IF INKEY$="b" THEN GO TO 42
00
3920 IF INKEY$="e" THEN GO TO 43
00
3925 IF INKEY$="d" THEN GO TO 44
00
3930 IF INKEY$="x" THEN RETURN
3935 GO TO 3900
4000 REM KILLED ROUTINE
4010 PRINT AT u,v; INK 2;"+"
4020 PRINT AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"
     YOU   ARE   DEAD          "
4030 FOR n=1 TO 3
4040 BEEP .1,0: BEEP .1,20: BEEP
 .1,-30: BEEP .1,10
4050 NEXT n
4060 PRINT AT 10,10; FLASH 1;"AN
OTHER GAME? Y/N "
4070 IF INKEY$="y" THEN GO TO 1
4080 IF INKEY$="n" THEN STOP
4090 GO TO 4070
4199 REM   SPELLS
4200 REM   BLASTING
4205 FOR n=1 TO LEN S$: IF S$(n)
="*" THEN GO TO 4250: NEXT n
4210 RETURN
4260 PRINT AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"
     BLAST SPELL CAST           "
4270 LET dr=0: LET og=0
4271 PRINT AT ou,ov;" ";AT du,dv
;" "
4275 LET a$=""
4276 LET S$=a$
4277 PRINT AT 20,0;"           "
4280 RETURN
4300 REM    SEEING
4305 FOR n=1 TO LEN S$: IF S$(n)
="P" THEN GO TO 4320
4310 RETURN
4320 PRINT AT 16,0; FLASH 1;"
  EYE  SPELL  CAST             "
4330 FOR L=1 TO 15
4335 FOR C=1 TO 30
4340 IF p(L,C)=1 THEN PRINT AT L
,C; INK 4;"■"
4345 IF p(L,C)=2 THEN PRINT AT L
,C; INK 6; FLASH 1;"K"
```

```
4350 IF p(L,C)=3 THEN PRINT AT L
,C; INK 1; FLASH 1;"▒"
4355 IF p(L,C)=4 THEN PRINT AT L
,C; INK 2; FLASH 1;"▒"
4360 IF p(L,C)=5 THEN PRINT AT L
,C; INK 1; FLASH 1;"▒"
4365 IF p(L,C)=6 THEN PRINT AT L
,C; INK 2; FLASH 1;"▒"
4380 NEXT C
4385 NEXT L
4387 LET a$=""
4388 LET S$=a$
4389 PRINT AT 20,0;"          "
4390 RETURN
4400 REM   doorway
4405 FOR n=1 TO LEN S$: IF S$(n)
="O" THEN GO TO 4450
4410 RETURN
4420 LET a$=""
4425 LET S$=a$
4450 GO TO 3
7000 RESTORE 7001: FOR n=USR "a"
 TO USR "q"+7: READ a: POKE n,a:
 NEXT n
7001 DATA 16.40.56.124.186.56.40
.40.56.40.40.254.186.186.170.170
,0,28,223,62,252,60,86,149,8,8,2
8,8,8,8,8,8,0,24,62,126,126,62,2
4,0
7002 DATA 56,108,150,174,124,56,
16,16,64,6,48,7,240,0,111,0,0,70
,9,6,0,124,130,124,4,106,144,70,
9,96,148,136,0,124,130,254,130,1
6,16,254,126,195,153,165,16,153,
195,126
7003 DATA 0,16,16,16,16,56,16,0,
0,56,84,16,56,16,16,0,72,40,24,8
,12,10,0,0,0,126,66,66,66,66,66,
66,0,0,24,36,219,60,24,0,0,0,32,
255,32,0,0,0
7100 RETURN
9000 DIM p(15,30)
9001 LET l=2: LET c=2
9002 LET p(l,c)=1
9003 IF l=14 AND c=29 THEN GO TO
 9006
9005 GO SUB 9017: GO TO 9002
9006 FOR t=1 TO 10: LET l=t: LET
 c=30-t*3
9007 FOR n=1 TO 15: GO SUB 9017
9008 IF l=14 AND c=29 THEN LET n
=15
9009 LET p(l,c)=1
9010 NEXT n: NEXT t
9016 GO TO 10
9017 LET x=RND
9020 IF x<.28 THEN LET l=l+1
9025 IF x>=.28 AND x<.5 THEN LET
 l=l-1
9030 IF x>=.5 AND x<.8 THEN LET
c=c+1
9040 IF x>=.8 THEN LET c=c-1
9041 IF l<2 THEN LET l=2
9042 IF l>14 THEN LET l=14
9045 IF c<2 THEN LET c=2
9047 IF c>29 THEN LET c=29
9050 RETURN
9119 LET l=l+(x<.25)-(x>=.25 AND
 x<.5)
9120 LET c=c+(x>=.75)-(x>=.5 AND
 x<.75)
9124 IF x<.3 THEN LET l=l+1
9125 IF x>=.3 AND x<.5 THEN LET
l=l-1
9130 IF x>=.5 AND x<.8 THEN LET
c=c+1
9140 IF x>=.8 THEN LET c=c-1
9900 CLS : FOR n=1 TO 7: BORDER
n: PAPER n-1: NEXT n
9910 PRINT " INCREDIBLE YOU COLL
ECTED 5 KEYS"''"THE KINGDOM IS Y
OURS RETURN IN  TRIUMPH"''''"
 WAN'T TO TRY IT AGAIN ? Y/N"
9920 IF INKEY$="y" THEN GO TO 1
9930 IF INKEY$="n" THEN STOP
9940 GO TO 9920
```





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ADVENTURE HELP

If you need advice or have some to offer write to Tony Bridge, Adventure Help, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

LET'S LOOK this month at some of the problems besetting our adventurers, and see if we can give some aid. Speaking of which, if you are stuck somewhere and need some help don't just take! You will have solved puzzles which are keeping other adventurers from progressing, and they will be interested to hear of your experiences.

The first problem is from Mark Esler, in Castle of Riddles (an Acornsoft program, for the Beeb machines). You will need the rod, Mark, don't throw it away. To solve the maze, try this. I have encoded the clue, as this is a popular program, and many other adventurers will be coming this way. If you have just started on The Castle, you may like to return to this page at a future date. Stating from the second letter of the clue, read every other letter. Upon reaching the end, you should return to the first letter and repeat the process.

OGDOANSODSRREOTOU MRANNADTSMARYZSEOE SXGIOTTTORMYACZOEL WOAUVRESR

This should get you into a very interesting part of the adventure, but assumes that you have completed the earlier part satisfactorily. Castle of Riddles is an absorbing, complex game in which the many parts mesh together like a large piece of machinery.

The Colour Genie is a machine which I am not familiar with — the first letter asking for help in a Genie adventure arrived this morning, from Mrs Barbara Hidley of Shropshire. She is currently stuck in The Vegan Incident, and can't open the crack in the wall, or find a use for the Brain Bomb.

In Quest 6, she can't find the houseboat (and who is Doonan). Can anyone help? And yes, Mrs Hindley, you should be able to get *Micro Adventurer* at any newsagent. If not ask him to order it for you or better still take out a subscription.

C J Tihanyi, of Clifton, is playing Ghost Town, one of the excellent Scott Adams series, and is stuck at the Tepee. Try a bit of music, C J, and keep your sense of rhythm.

I can't help you in Xenos, which is for the TRS80 — does anyone know how C J can avoid getting blown up when he opens the safe? As for Artic's Inca Curse, to dowse the fire you will need to smother it in some way — and don't forget to have a source of light with you when the fire goes out.

On the subject of Artic's adventures, James Jennett, of Widnes, has trouble on Espionage Island. To get past the tank (or rather to divert it) you must HSIHNITNOEHTO OLREC.

This brings me to a letter from J R Jones, on a RAF base down on deepest Dyfed. He is stuck on Planet of Death, which is also from Artic. He is trying to get through the forcefield. If you have asked for help, J A, you will have had a little message about a waltz. Then do this: EFAINRDETLHAESNEDRA TNWCIEC.

Finally, onto the hot favourite of the moment. The Hobbit, of course, continues to baffle and intrigue people. Some are stuck on Gollum's riddle — it is an old chestnut and, of course, obvious when you see the answer: ETRHIESAMNA SNW.

The Goblin's Dungeon is the place where everybody gets stuck at one time or another, and about which I get more pleas of help than anything else. Try this; DGTEHTETN HBORREIANKTWOICNAD RORWYGYOOWUEASNT.

As usual, let me know of your experiences.

ADVENTURE CONTACT

MICRO Apple II **Adventure** Zork I **Problem** How do you open the grating in the clearing? How can you go west from the timber room with a light? **Name** Laura Crean, 19 Temple Sheen, London.

MICRO Vic 20 (16K) **Adventure** Pharaoh's Tomb **Problem** How do you get past the swamp? **Name** Adrian MacKenzie **Address** 69 Watling St, Uddington, Glasgow.

MICRO Lynx **Adventure** Colossal Adventure **Problem** How do I open the clam and find the treasure chest? **Name** Christopher Day **Address** 19 Eden St, Saltburn, Cleveland.

MICRO TI 99/4a **Adventure** Pyramid of Doom **Problem** How do you get past the giant oyster, purple worm or iron statue? **Name** Simon Bell **Address** 10 Bransdale, Pine Hills, Guisborough, Cleveland.

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** The Hobbit **Problem** How do you get home from the dragon's lair? **Name** Darren Cooper **Address** White Lodge, Chastham Lodge, Chatham Rd, Blue Bell Hill, Aylesford, Kent.

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** The Hobbit **Problem** How do I escape the pale bulbous eyes? Even wearing the magic ring is no protection from them. **Name** David Blunden **Address** 49 Little Norton Lane, Sheffield.

HAVE YOU BEEN staring at the screen for days, or given up in disgust, stuck in an adventure whose problems seem insurmountable? Adventure Contact may be the answer. This column is designed to put adventurers in touch with one another. When you're stumped a fellow adventurer may be able to help — and you may be able to solve other people's problems. If you are having difficulties with an adventure, fill in this coupon and send it to Adventure Contact, Micro Adventurer, 12/13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD. We will publish Adventure Contact entries each month in this special column.

Micro ....

Adventure ....

Problem ....

....

....

Name ....

Address ....

....

MICRO Spectrum **Adventure** The Hobbit **Problem** I cannot get to the Lake town. I have been to the long lake. **Name** Kenneth MacMahon **Address** 6 Jubilee Gardens, Bearsden, Glasgow, G61 2R7.

MICRO Dragon 32 **Adventure** Black Sanctum **Problem** When I return to the crypt with seven items, the figure in white does not return, why? **Name** Stuart J. Toms **Address** 2 Claypits Rd, Boreham, Essex.

MICRO CBM 64 **Adventure** Fools Gold **Problem** Where do you find the saw to make the ladder? What use is the ancient shovel? **Name** P. Angus **Address** 141 Marlborough Rd, Stoke, Coventry.

MICRO Dragon 32 **Adventure** Adventure Zoo **Problem** I need to know the route to the mage, which is in the maze near the pyramid. **Name** I. Feeney **Address** 16 Surrey Way, Laindon West, Essex.

MICRO Spectrum **Adventure** Planet of Death **Problem** How do I pick up the flint on the plateau? **Name** Paul King **Address** 554 Goresbrook Rd, Dagenham, Essex.



COMPETITION CORNER

Tony Roberts tests your skill — send your answers to Competition Corner, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

The best 20 answers we receive will win a copy of Space Shuttle from Microdeal. This simulation is available on cassette for the Dragon 32, Spectrum 48K, Electron, Tandy Colour, Atari, BBC B and Commodore 64. The disk versions available are for the Commodore 64, BBC B, Atari and Oric. Let us know which version you want when you send in your competition entry.

Help Tisch to recapture her past glory

IF YOU have been following this puzzle series so far, you really must be beginning to appreciate the finer points of the black dragon, Tisch.

In her quest to resume the prominent position that dragons had formerly held, she had forced you to help her win back the rings of power, but force is no longer really needed — your rewards for penetrating the millennia-old defence around each ring so far looks as if it will make you very, very, rich.

You are also learning to understand the logic of the minds that created the defences, such as those in this puzzle.

You are to find the B ring and it looks easy. Tisch has placed it in this pile of box-like containers, which is strewn with debris. One of them contains the ring. The rest probably contain delay surprises that you'd rather not think about.

In order to conceal the right box the B on its lid has been replaced by an A, but that's the very thing that betrays the ring's location, because the logical patter has been disturbed.

As a tie-breaker complete the following sentence in less than 15 words. The best simulations are . . .

Your entry must arrive by the last working day in March.

The winners and the solution will be published in our May issue.

You may only enter once. Entries will not be acknowledged and we cannot enter into correspondence on the result.

Winners

CLEVER Tisch outsmarted many of our December and January readers so there are less than the 40 winners we had anticipated for the two competitions.

The December winners and runners-up are: Graeme Foster, of Bourne End; A J Hitchens, of Bailrigg; G Colagiacomo, of Edinburgh; K Baker, of Illonois; D Gray, of Thetford; W Perry, of Norbury; A Gale, of Ealing, W13; G Barrett, of Cheshunt; P Mullen, of Greyabbey; C Reeves, of Southampton; C Heath, of Norton Lindsey.

The solution: the sequence of rooms is 2 (take small chest), 6 (put the pearls from the chest into the vases: take the vases, leave the chest), 8 (lower the vases with the rope, untie the Ring and put it into one of the vases), 7 and 5 (ignore the statue . . . you have nothing with which to remove the emerald). Then go outside to relative freedom. You end up with the pearls and vases.

Only one entrant, P P Cockburn, of Cambridge, in the January competition gave the correct answer. But because of the standard of entries we have awarded prizes also to 13 runners-up. They are:

K Sampanthar, of York; R Sheppard, of Blackpool; J Lewis, of Fradley; A Moat, of Glasgow; D L Tuck, of Essex; T Brown, of Arklow; E H Furnival, of Rochdale; R J Allan, of Peterborough; P Wallace, of Falkirk; D Cummings, of New Herrington; W Perry, of Norbury; R M Henderson, of Sussex; S Tooby, of Romford.

The solution: 66 minutes.

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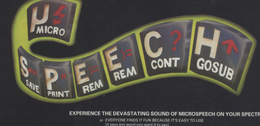
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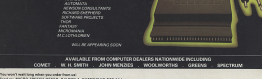
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